



# THE INDEPENDENT

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## Tories torn by agonising choice



Hague: Said to 'have the right agenda'; scored 62 votes, up 21 on first ballot

**Anthony Bevins  
Colin Brown  
and Fran Abrams**

Right-wing Conservative MPs were left last night with an agonising choice for their party leadership: Kenneth Clarke, whose views they do not share on Europe, or William Hague, who is not respected by the purist Euro-sceptics.

In yesterday's inconclusive second-round ballot, Mr Clarke got 64 votes, up 15 on last week's first round; Mr Hague got 62, up by 21; and John Redwood won 38, an additional 11 votes.

As runner-up, Mr Redwood is automatically eliminated, leaving Mr Clarke and Mr Hague to fight it out for the Redwood vote. Some MPs immediately switched to Mr Clarke, others to Mr Hague, while others spoke of abstention. But the essential agony of the Redwood vote was summed up by James Cran, a Euro-sceptic MP who originally voted for Michael Howard and who backed Mr Redwood yesterday. He said of Mr Hague: "There is one candidate who has got the right agenda but I'm not sure he is a heavy hitter in the House, which the leader of the Opposition has to be. And then I've got another candidate who is a heavy hitter but who hasn't got the right agenda, particularly on Europe. So I have got a classical dilemma to resolve by sometime on Thursday morning."

It is possible that so many Euro-sceptics could abstain in tomorrow's final ballot that the new leader might be left without the 83-plus votes needed to give him the support of a majority of the 164 Tory MPs.

The man who comes top of the ballot in such circumstances would win the leadership - but he would be so damaged that he could not be expected to survive for the rest of the Parliament. That result could raise the real prospect of yet another Tory leadership challenge, once new rules had been set up to give party members a vote for the first time.

It might also increase the temptation for the former Cabinet ministers Michael Portillo and Chris Patten to seek a return to the Commons, to stage a more clear-cut contest.

Last night, the torn loyalties of the Redwood vote turned to angry exchanges in Commons corridors. One Redwood supporter said he would wait until Mr Redwood had given a lead, but another Redwood voter told him: "You can't possibly vote for Clarke." Yet that was precisely what Tere-

sa Gorman was hinting at. Julian Lewis, who voted for Mr Redwood, said he was thinking of abstaining. "John Redwood has shown tremendous honour and clarity but the party has decided not to go down that road."

John Townend, chairman of the right-wing 92 Group, said he would be writing a letter to all group members today, urging them to vote for Mr Hague.

"If the right can't get its act together over this we might as well pack up," he said. "One candidate is a Europhile and supported by the left. William Hague is on the centre right, and in the last two weeks he has taken a much tougher position on Europe. His views are more in line with John Redwood's."

Mr Redwood was last night holding urgent talks with his campaign team at the Commons, amid speculation that he would be offered a key role in the Shadow Cabinet by Mr Clarke.

One of Mr Clarke's backers said: "Ken is cutting not fine deals, but he recognises that on domestic policy, education and health, Mr Redwood is putting some interesting ideas forward which will be taken up."

Michael Heseltine warned again last night that while Mr Clarke was offering unity, and the inclusion of all strands of thinking in his frontbench team - that was not on offer from Mr Hague.

Referring to Mr Hague's threat to exclude anyone who did not toe his line in opposition to the single currency, Mr Heseltine said: "It is wrong for a potential leader to lay down terms which must divide the party, by definition, that excludes a significant part of Conservative thinking."

However, Peter Lilley, who backed Mr Hague after dropping out of the contest in the first round, said last night that he believed his candidate could unite the party around a Euro-sceptic stance.

"I think the party as a whole will have no difficulty with the position William Hague has spelt out, of ruling out membership of the single currency in the next Parliament. That was the direction we were moving in, and I am sure that will be acceptable to the whole bulk of the party," he said.

The result led to clashes outside committee room 14, where Tory MPs had trooped in all day to vote. One Clarke supporter angrily protested to a Hague campaigner that Mr Clarke would be excluded from a Hague Shadow Cabinet.

But in a clear sign that the Hague camp were trying to win back some Clarke votes, he was assured: "It's a technicality."



Clarke: Described as 'a hard hitter'; scored 64, up 15 Photographs: John Voss

**'It is hard to  
see how either  
man can hold  
this together'**  
**Andrew Marr,  
page 23**

## 'If this were a serious party, then...'

An eager young journalist, standing in the committee corridor yesterday afternoon, asked Tory MP James Cran how he had voted in round two of the leadership election. "Sod off," replied the graceless Euro-sceptic, and scuttled away crossly. And sod off, as it turns out, is exactly what he and many of his colleagues did vote for.

If the Conservatives were a serious political party (like Labour say, or Natural Law) this contest would have ended last night. Unable to stomach Ken Clarke (the adult choice), 20 or so of the less ideologically Redwood supporters - knowing after the first ballot that he could never win - would have thrown their

weight behind William Hague in the second round. After all, their man had already proved (by beating both Lilley and Howard) that he was the champion of the Tory right, and had ensured that his views on matters European would have to be consulted by the new leader. What was now important was the manner of a Hague victory.

But this does not appear to be a serious party. It was had enough that the electorate should be so small and unrepresentative, and that the voting method should be so arcane. These legacies of two complete decades might just have been overcome by a steeliness of purpose. Instead, the division

of the votes ensures that Mr Hague, should he emerge victorious tomorrow, manages both to look like everyone's second choice and - simultaneously - a prisoner of the Redwoodite right. It is hard to imagine a result that could have made Hague's accession seem less assured, short of making him pose naked on top of the statue of Richard the Lionheart.

If nothing else though, the "sod off" vote has resolved one question that has been lying around since the election: was this Tory defeat more akin to the Labour debate of 1979, or that of 1983? Would it be the beginning of a process of renewal, or usher in a period of infighting



**DAVID  
AARONOVITCH**

and political criticism? In 1979, following the 30-seat Thatcher victory, a large section of the Labour Party (and, to an extent, people like me) got it into their heads that the problem had been an absence of socialist zeal. What was needed was import controls, increased taxation and workers' councils. So for three

years the party and the electorate ceased to exist in the same cosmos as each other. The landslide defeat of 1983 cured most Labour supporters of these delusions. They set out on the Kinnockite voyage to dock once more with the voters. But it took 14 more years and many shed tears to succeed.

Right now the momentum in the Tory parliamentary party is with the zealots. The youngest, most vigorous members are on the right. There is no Labour equivalent of such strange young grey-haired fundamentalists as Territorial Army officer and Prayer Book Society member Desmond Swayne, or ex Tory student John Bercow.

Emboldened by the suicidal support of great Conservative newspapers, they are optimistic that they can at worst affect, and at best inherit, the rest of us know that they can only destroy.

After the figures were announced Mr Hague swept forward to the waiting cameras at the St Stephen's entrance. But he could not tell a tale of determination and change, nor outline his strategy for taking the party from woe to weal. No, this was his statement of triumph: "I'm delighted to have the support of 62 colleagues and to have gained more support over the last week than any other candidate." From 41 to 62 in a week. Whoopee.

## Schools plan classroom timeshare

**Lucy Ward  
Education Correspondent**

A council is so short of school places it is considering splitting the school day into two and sending children to lessons in shifts.

Early shift pupils in Enfield, north London, will start lessons at 7.45am, while those on the late shift would not leave school until 7.45pm.

The scheme, one of a range of options being considered by the authority to counter a looming shortfall of hundreds of secondary places, would create a logistical nightmare for parents, who could be forced to drop off and collect primary and

secondary-age children at different times. Meanwhile, late-shift pupils would end up walking home well after night-fall in winter.

The scheme is already being challenged by governors and heads. One primary school parent governor said: "The mind boggles at the logistics, let alone the difficulties it would make for the teaching staff and parents. "Would there be teams of cleaners whizzing round the school between sessions, as happens with charter flights?"

Enfield is not alone among London boroughs and other urban authorities in facing a places shortage, although no other local education authori-

ty is understood to have formally considered a shift system. Its proposals will raise fresh concerns over how best to manage schools admissions, which were widely deregulated under the Conservative government in the name of offering parents a choice of schools.

Enfield's schools are over-subscribed partly because many children attend from outside the borough. A recent Audit Commission survey found that one in five parents is denied their first choice of school, rising to one in two in London.

Enfield LEA's suggestion is one of eight options out for consultation to schools and governors in the borough, to counter

a projected shortfall of 200 places for children transferring to secondary school in September 1998, worsening to 400 places by 1999.

The authority insists it has no money to provide new school buildings to accommodate the extra pupils, and claims it has failed to win government approval for borrowing to cover the costs, because the bidding criteria involved are "too insensitive".

The places shortfall has come about through a combination of factors, the LEA says, including a rise in the number of school-age children in the borough and the increasing numbers of pupils coming to its secondary

schools from neighbouring authorities.

The proposed shift system, which is based on a model operating in some parts of Canada and the US, would allow the authority to double the number of pupils educated in the same building, the consultation document says.

By holding two sessions, starting at 7.45am and 2pm, schools would also remove the responsibility for providing lunches for pupils.

Other options for accommodating more pupils, without adding buildings, include increasing the numbers of children per class over the agreed number, or farming out sixth-

form provision to colleges or alternative rented buildings.

Helen Osman, a parent governor at Grange Park Primary School whose nine-year-old daughter, Nicola, is due to move to secondary school in two years' time, said any further enlargement of class sizes risked damaging children's education, while a shift system would cause logistical chaos for families.

Councillor Achilles Georgiou, chair of Enfield's education committee, said the authority had taken a responsible attitude to planning places but had suffered through government refusal to grant permission to borrow cash for building.

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**QUICKLY**  
Microsoft on the move  
A Cambridge University professor of computer science is the reason behind Microsoft's decision to invest £50m over the next five years, creating a "silicon fen." Page 3

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Height measured in inches

# Microsoft's £50 million brain

Computing giant sets up in Cambridge for the sake of one man

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

If Roger Needham were a footballer, rock star or supermodel, then probably nobody would be surprised that an international company intends to invest £50m over the next five years to build on his talents.

But Mr Needham is neither: he is a 62-year-old professor of computer science at Cambridge University's computer laboratory, who has worked on the subject since 1956. And the company making the investment is Microsoft – the biggest software company in the world. But the outcome could be to make Britain pre-eminent in computer software in Europe.

Microsoft announced yesterday that it intends to establish a research arm in Cambridge, hiring up to 50 specialists in computing from all over Europe and investing £10m in a venture capital fund, to be run by the entrepreneur Hermann Hauser, which should create a "Silicon Fen" – a breeding ground for high-tech companies and expertise like Silicon Valley in western California.

This is the first time Microsoft has set up such an establishment away from its headquarters in Redmond in Washington State. Until now, its UK operation has consisted almost entirely of sales and marketing staff.

The intention of the new centre is to develop the new generation of computers – able to listen and speak, and see what is going on around them. "Computers today are pretty inflexible," said Nathan Myhrvold, Microsoft's chief technology officer – one of the most powerful people in the corporation besides its co-founder and chief Bill Gates. "To make computers evolve as a tool we need to invent new technologies."

Professor Needham said: "There's a rich area to mine in this field – but you should realise that new computer products are a long time in the pipeline. The things that are on every desk today, such as a mouse, were developed in research 20 years ago."

Many new technologies, such as picture and speech recognition, are already being developed at the laboratory in Cambridge under Professor Needham. His presence was key to Microsoft's decision. The corporation decided earlier this year to expand its research and development division, on which it already spends \$2bn (£1.25bn) annually. It had bare-

ly begun the process of investigating possible locations – such as Boston, where the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Laboratory is based – when Mr Myhrvold heard that Professor Needham was not presently attached to any industrial work.

"We did consider a number of places, and Cambridge was at the top of the list," said Mr Myhrvold, who took a postgraduate course at Cambridge University in 1983. "It fell into place." Professor Needham commented simply, "When they found I was available, they basically short-circuited the shortlist process."

While that might sound arrogant, he has been in the forefront of computer research for decades, and can reel off a list of products and systems such as local-area networks, encrypted password files and sorting algorithms which he helped develop and are now in common use. Microsoft tried to recruit him seven years ago, offering to set up a research laboratory on the American west coast which he could run. He turned the offer down. Now Microsoft has come to him.

The new laboratory, to be called Microsoft Research, will house a mixture of Microsoft employees, students and people on sabbatical.

The investment sparked by Professor Needham could drive an entire industry in the area. Microsoft has made millions of many of its employees, who are given lucrative stock options in return for the hectic lives they have to lead, under huge pressure to produce results.

But the presence of the research centre should also encourage local firms to set up and use it to boost themselves. Told that some local software companies were worried that the centre would drain talent away, Mr Hauser said: "For years in Cambridge we've had the problem that small software companies didn't have the connectivity with the bigger market in the rest of the world. Many companies that I have talked to welcome the arrival of Microsoft. Their investment means we will be able to attract more talent into Cambridge to make it the mini Silicon Valley that it deserves to be."

Professor Needham added, "We shall be looking for the best people from the rest of the European Union, not taking a vacuum cleaner around the outskirts of Cambridge."



Cashing in the chips: Roger Needham, who has attracted £50m of Microsoft cash to develop a centre of computer expertise in Cambridge Photograph: Andrew Buurman

## Middle Eastern tycoon joins list of Oxford and Cambridge benefactors

The Middle Eastern businessman Wafic Said's funding of an Oxford business school was endorsed yesterday by a council of Oxford dons. Mr Said's revised plans for the £40m Wafic Said Business School – his £20m donation is the biggest given to Oxford since the Second World War – was approved by 342 dons and only 55 voted against it.

Other recent tycoon benefactors include: Rupert Murdoch, Jean Althaus, on her appointment as the Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language and Communication in 1994, said she would use it to "fill the gap between literature and language". The chair, based at Worcester College Oxford, was named after

the press magnate who gave £3m towards it.

Hans Rausing, Swedish-born TetraPak King, made his money by inventing new kinds of milk and fruit juice cartons, and then moved to Britain to avoid Swedish taxes. He poured £22.5m into a new mathematics centre for Cambridge. Mr Rausing, 72, is Britain's second richest man. He supposedly gave the money after developing an interest in cosmology and in Professor Stephen Hawking's work.

Charles Corfield, A British businessman based in California, Mr Corfield pledged \$5m to Oxford last September. Aged 35, he had graduated just 14 years before. He abandoned a doctorate in the United

States to produce software; his most successful product, FrameMaker, became a market leader in technical publishing, and last year the company he founded a decade ago was sold for \$500m (£312m). The money he gave to Cambridge went into a Centre for Mathematical Studies. The first stage of the £25m centre will open in 2000.

WK Kellogg In perhaps the most bizarre of all name changes, in 1990 an Oxford college decided to take the name of the inventor of Corn Flakes, WK Kellogg, Rawley House, which takes mature and part-time students, became Kellogg College after the Kellogg Foundation gave it around £9m in 10 years.

Sir Philip Harris In 1994 Manchester College, Oxford,

renamed itself after the founder of a carpet business whose son, Sir Philip Harris, gave it £3.6m. Sir Philip, a leading Tory party fundraiser, threatened to withdraw his donation, which the college needs to gain full university status, when there was opposition to the title "Manchester Academy and Harris College", but the change went ahead, with only 9 out of 200 dons voting against it.

Sir Patrick Sheehy and BAT Cambridge, after fierce opposition from cancer research groups and its own academics and undergraduates, eventually accepted £15m to name a chair after the former chairman of the tobacco giant BAT, Sir Patrick Sheehy. BAT is a big donor to charities – it gave £147,000 to medical research

in Newcastle last summer. Despite quails, Cambridge took the money, creating the Sir Patrick Sheehy Professorship of International Relations on the way. BAT defended itself, while acknowledging that smoking "was a risk factor for certain diseases".

Sir John Moores The biggest recipient outside Oxbridge was John Moores University in the late Eighties. Liverpool Polytechnic changed name and status after a donation from the Littlewoods Pools millionaire, who died in 1993. The university said it was proud of the name which underlined its commitment to Liverpool whilst paying tribute to a businessman and benefactor of projects in the city. It hoped to double the number of students to nearly 30,000 by the end of the Nineties.

## Murdoch's bruiser of the box stands down

Paul McCann  
Media Correspondent

The man known alternately as "the little no-neck bastard"; "the man who saved Rupert Murdoch" and "the most powerful man in sport" shocked the television industry yesterday by bowing out for health reasons. Sam Chisholm, chief executive and saviour of satellite channel BSkyB, announced that he would be stepping down because of his doctors' concern about his

asthma. Rumours circulating the television industry for some time suggest that Mr Chisholm, 57, is more seriously ill than is being admitted publicly.

The former Sky chief, whose salary and share options package of £9m last year made him the highest paid executive in the United Kingdom, is credited with turning around Rupert Murdoch's satellite television operation to the point where his power and importance threatened that of Mr Murdoch.

Sky Television, as it was then, was losing more than £14m a week when Mr Chisholm joined in 1990 and its massive debts were threatening to bring down Mr Murdoch's whole media empire. The company has since floated on the stock exchange and is now worth £10bn, it made over a £315m profit last year and is acknowledged as the most successful pay-TV venture in the world.

Mr Chisholm cultivated an

image as an earthy antipodean whose management style was based on Genghis Khan. His squat frame and bruiser's demeanour were used to great effect when he clashed noisily with Kelvin MacKenzie, the former editor of the *Sun* noted for his own temper. The two tried unsuccessfully to run BSkyB together. Mr MacKenzie lost the battle and resigned.

"He dominated Sky's culture from the top to the bottom," said one former

employee yesterday. "It will be interesting to see if they can keep up the standard."

Mr Murdoch said yesterday: "Sam Chisholm is unquestionably one of the best executives I have ever worked with. I'm really sorry that he has to step down."

Mr Chisholm will be replaced by Mark Booth, chief operating officer at the Japanese joint venture broadcaster JSkyB. It had been expected that he would be replaced by Elisabeth Murdoch, Mr Murdoch's daughter

and director of programming at BSkyB. Mr Chisholm is known to have clashed with Ms Murdoch this year when he instituted a programming review while she was on maternity leave. It is believed that Mr Murdoch ordered Mr Chisholm to suspend the review until she returned to work.

For all his aggression Mr Chisholm earned the respect, if not the affection, of his employees at Sky. "He pushed me harder than I have ever been

pushed," said one yesterday.

"And it made me better." For Mr Chisholm, who made his name with Kerry Packer, the other Australian media mogul, and his "cricket circus" in the 1970s, the formula for Sky's success has been simple. Every important sport, from the Premier League to cricket and Rugby, has been bought up at a cost of more than £1bn in order to force sports fans to buy dishes and subscribe to the channel.

City reaction, page 25



Sam Chisholm: Health worries

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## news

## No more official junkets for journalists, Brown rules

Anthony Bevins  
and Ian Burrell

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is about to bring down the shutters on the junkets and gifts lavishly handed out to the thousands of journalists who attend European summits.

The Treasury fears that food, drink and gifts for the media hordes could cost the taxpayer as much as £1.5m when Britain takes on the six months' presidency of the European Union in January.

Charlie Whelan, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's press

secretary, said in Amsterdam yesterday: "We are determined to keep the costs down, without excessive hospitality and gifts."

But foreign journalists reacted with anger to the decision yesterday and warned that it could "backfire" and have a detrimental effect on the way Britain was portrayed overseas.

The generosity and scale of this week's Amsterdam summit has left British officials aghast.

With an estimated 3,200 journalists and technicians accredited - a running buffet of sandwiches, cream cakes, cherry waffles, chocolate eclairs, orange juice, and coffee has been

topped by meals served on barges moored on the Amstel River - and nothing has been too much for the Dutch government.

As well as ice cream cornets, the journalists have even been given free telephones to call anywhere in the world. Normally, at summits, the telephone calls, at least, are charged to the individual.

There has even been a free gift of a luggage trolley complete with a bottle of high octane spirits, and an expensive set of pens. The British estimate that the Dutch taxpayer will have to fork out about £3m for two days'

entertainment of the media pack.

By contrast, Britain's proposed parsimony provoked threats of a boycott of the summit from sections of the foreign press corps.

Ali Bahajoub, a former president of the London-based Foreign Press Association, said: "This will be received very badly."

"To be thrifty can be counter-productive. If you have got 1,000 journalists coming to cover the summit then to spend £50,000 on them is more than justifiable."

He said that poor hospitali-

ty would only annoy journalists and contribute to "knocking copy" which would reflect badly on Britain.

He added: "London is the hub of the world's press and if they carry on treating us badly people will just move out."

The foreign press corps is already smarting over Britain's decision to restrict access to President Clinton's recent visit to Downing Street to American and British reporters.

By contrast, other countries have turned the wooing of journalists into a fine art.

Reporters visiting many southern European countries

are fêted by government officials, given rooms in luxury country hotels and swanky seaside resorts with plentiful supplies of high quality food and drink.

Italy once even considered flying a selected group of journalists from Brussels to Rome in a private jet for a one-night party "to celebrate the end of the presidency".

The Greeks treated hacks to a short stay on a holiday island. "It was completely non-work related," said one.

When Ireland held the presidency in 1990 an entire train - with its own bar and dining car

was given over to moving the press around the country. Reporters talked of the "flow of Guinness" as they went on a trip from Dublin to Galway where they were accommodated in a superb country mansion.

The fine hospitality is usually accompanied by generous interview facilities with government ministers.

One Brussels reporter said: "The countries that have the least diplomatic clout felt it was more important to get the journalists on their side."

Four summits are scheduled in Britain: A January jobs summit for the G8 group of eight

most industrialised nations, in London; a York European economic and finance ministers meeting, in February; and two summits in June, another G8 in Birmingham, and an EU heads of government meeting in Cardiff. The path for Britain's new Labour, new austerity policy, should be paved by the Luxembourg, who are next in line for the European presidency, to the end of the year. They have charged for food and drink at summits in the past and are notorious - and even resented - for the fact that they resolutely refuse to hand out free gifts.

## Man is held over murders of RUC officers

David McKibbin  
Ireland Correspondent

One man was arrested yesterday in connection with the IRA murders on Monday of two Royal Ulster Constabulary officers in Co Armagh. The arrest came as the RUC carried out a number of searches in the town of Lurgan.

Meanwhile, an unusually intense wave of grief, revulsion and condemnation was evident in Northern Ireland yesterday in the wake of the killings.

The angry condemnation was accompanied by continuing bewilderment about how the IRA

ist party has failed to agree with the Government a mutually acceptable approach on the question of arms de-commissioning. Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, wants this issue dealt with within the next few weeks so that the multi-party talks can move on to substantive negotiations.

These developments, taken with the dashing of the hopes for an early IRA ceasefire and above all the murders of the policemen, have driven up tensions which were already running at a high level.

In Lurgan where the two constables were killed life came to a standstill for a minute's silence at noon. At the murder scene Catholics and Protestants united in a vigil of remembrance while hundreds queued outside the local RUC station to sign a book of condolence.

Killings in Northern Ireland are traditionally followed by condemnation from political and church figures, but the strength of this emotional reaction seems to indicate that the two deaths have touched deeper emotions than usual.

Feeling was heightened by the fact that the two constables, John Graham and David Johnston, were both in their early 30s and between them had five young children aged between two and ten.

Ronnie Flanagan, the RUC Chief Constable, said after visiting their families: "These two young families are absolutely ripped apart. They are devastated and what makes it worse is that it was so needless."

Sinn Féin's president, Gerry Adams, was very much on the defensive, insisting that his goal remained a lasting peace and commending the IRA's 1994-96 cessation as "by any international standards a very good cessation. He declared: "It wasn't condemnations, it wasn't the virulence of denunciations which brought that about."

Leading article, page 21



Mo Mowlam: Seeks progress

believed it was advancing its cause by carrying out the killings at a time when the Government and Sinn Féin appeared to be converging on the issue of republican entry into talks. The overall atmosphere remained grim in anticipation of further violence in the wake of the murders.

With the security forces and the Catholic population braced for possible retaliatory acts of violence from loyalist paramilitants, a flurry of activity on the parades front brought no sign of any last-minute breakthrough in advance of the impending marching season.

On the political talks front, meanwhile, the Ulster Union-



Out of the race: John Redwood giving his reaction after coming last in yesterday's ballot for the Tory party leadership Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## Nicholson claims more Tory defections to follow

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

New rumours of splits in the Conservative Party were circulating last night as Emma Nicholson, who defected to the Liberal Democrats, said some of her former colleagues were planning to follow her.

The claim followed statements from Labour sources who said this week that up to a dozen Tories were actively talking to them about the possibility of a Tory split if William Hague was elected leader of the party. Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, said the party had a number of links, both informal and formal, with Tory MPs.

Miss Nicholson said "lots" of Tories, some of them MPs, had approached her. Many of them had been deeply distressed by the party's plight, she added. "Lots of people from inside and outside Parliament have been talking to me. Individuals of prominent position and of humble position have talked to me almost every day. Some people have already decided what they are going to do," she said.

Although a significant group of MPs might be thinking of joining the Liberal Democrats, the decision was very hard for them, she added. "It's difficult to leave the party that you pledged yourself to. It's rather like the end of a marriage."

Miss Nicholson would not say how many MPs had told her that they were thinking of jumping ship, but she said she did not believe the party could survive in its current form. "I don't think the Conservative Party is able to be led any longer. I personally believe we are seeing its extinction in the shape and form it has been in this century... I believe it will become a true right-wing party," she said.

Members of Kenneth Clarke's camp believe the rumours of a split have been put about to destabilise their chances of success in the Conservative leadership contest. However, with both Labour and the Liberal Democrats claiming that they had been talking to Tory dissidents, a split seemed increasingly likely. The claims were dismissed by sources on the left of the Conservative Party, though. "They said there was 'practically none of that kind of talk'."

## Blair to decide fate of Millennium exhibition

Christian Wolmar

Tony Blair will make a final decision today on the future of the Millennium Exhibition at Greenwich amid growing calls for it to be scrapped.

Mr Blair will make the decision himself and present it to Cabinet tomorrow.

Although Mr Blair is known to favour going ahead with the

project which will cost £780m - including up to £450m of public money - senior Labour sources were saying last night that it will almost certainly be scrapped because it does not appear financially viable.

Yesterday, in one of the first putative backbench revolts of the new Parliament, over Labour 20 MPs supported a motion tabled by a new Labour

backbencher, Nick Palmer MP for Bracklow, calling for the project to be abandoned. The MPs are not only concerned at the waste of the lottery money going into the project, but are also questioning the potential waste of private sector sponsorship. Mr Palmer said: "There is only a finite amount available for sponsorship from business. The Exhibition will suck up all

the money, which could go to projects around the country." Much of the opposition is from Midlands MPs who are already annoyed that so much of lottery funding has gone to London.

Labour MPs are also concerned that so much money is being spent on an exhibition when there is a desperate shortage of funds for health and education.

However, sources close to the project said the MPs have misunderstood the basis of the funding: "This is money earmarked by the Millennium Commission to celebrate the millennium. It cannot be diverted to health and education."

Although a considerable amount has been spent clearing contamination from the land at Greenwich, only around £25m

is what the Millennium Commission calls "net of legacy" - that is money that would be wasted, mainly by having to pay compensation for breaking contracts with companies.

While business in London has generally supported the project, there has been a noticeable cooling in the past few days as it has become clear that the scheme is in trouble again.

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Lynda Woodroffe and her son Daniel. Photograph: PA

## Death in the Alps and a son's claim for the father he never knew

James Mellor

A six-year-old boy whose father died after a fall in the French Alps yesterday began a High Court action against a mountain guide he claims is responsible for the accident.

The child, Daniel Hedley, was not born at the time of the accident in 1990 and his father Gerald was unaware that his wife, Lynda Woodroffe, was pregnant at the time.

A novice climber, Mr Hedley, 41, was killed after plunging from the north face of the four Ronds, near Chamonix in the Mont Blanc range.

Kieran Coonan QC, who is representing Daniel, claims that the fatal fall was caused by the failure of mountain guide, David Cuthbertson, who was also a family friend, to anchor Mr Hedley securely to the mountain.

Mr Coonan described how

the pair set out from a mountain hut at 4,000m to climb a 350m section of ice and rock. At first Mr Hedley led but when he complained of fatigue Mr Cuthbertson, an experienced mountaineer, took over.

The court heard that the guide, who is from Dorset, Inverness, was 20m above his charge when the ground slipped from beneath him.

The fall caused Mr Hedley's single ice screw, which was

meant to attach him safely to the rock face in the event of a fall, to fail and both men plummeted to the snow and rocks below.

Mr Hedley, a respected art conservation expert who had worked at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and had been working on a book for the Getty Institute in the United States, died from his injuries while Mr Cuthbertson sustained a fracture to his knee.

Mr Cuthbertson, 49, told the

court that he had made a conscious decision to disregard strict safety rules, which would have required him to attach Mr Hedley with two anchors, because global warming made the heat so intense that he feared an immediate rock fall.

"It was the hottest I had ever known it even though it was only 8.30 in the morning," the guide told Mr Justice Dyson.

The sun was shining directly on the summit above where we

were climbing and I was extremely concerned about the danger of rocks.

"Since the 1960s, global warming has affected the Alps badly. They are far more treacherous now."

Earlier he had explained: "I wanted to move away as quickly as possible to the safety of a rock face to avoid a possible catastrophe of a rock fall from above. Gerry Hedley was my friend. I regret the incident

but I still believe I took the right action to get us both out of the way."

Mr Cuthbertson's testimony prompted Mr Justice Dyson to respond: "The sun is at the heart of this defence."

Later the victim's wife, Lynda Woodroffe, told of her plans to meet her husband the following day and tell about her pregnancy.

Six-year-old Daniel Hedley is claiming around £100,000 of

damages from the mountaineer for the loss of his father which, he alleges, was caused by Mr Cuthbertson adopting dangerous climbing practices.

Mr Cuthbertson is believed to be the first mountain guide to be sued for negligence in relation to a fatal climbing accident. The ruling could have serious repercussions for organisers and guides involved in dangerous sports and activities.



Gerald Hedley, right, with his friend and guide David Cuthbertson whom his son is now suing. Photograph: PA

## Doctors repudiate claims that fluoride is dangerous

Jeremy Laurance  
Health Editor

Eight medical organisations yesterday condemned new claims that fluoride added to water and toothpaste to prevent dental decay was harming the population's health.

Scientists opposed to fluoride are to present research today which they claim shows that the chemical causes cancer, brain damage and defects in the im-

mune system. Dr Peter Mansfield, president of the National Pure Water Association, will present data on more than 600 of his own patients which he says shows levels of fluoride ingestion are a "cause for grave economic and symptomatic concern".

Paul Connert, professor of chemistry at St Lawrence University, New York, will stress that the gap between safe and toxic levels of fluoride is dangerously small.

The claims are repeated in a Channel 4 programme to be broadcast tomorrow and appeared in newspaper articles linked to the programme last weekend.

The British Dental Association (BDA) dismissed the claims as unfounded and said that they perpetuated the "illusion of a scientific controversy".

In a detailed rebuttal, backed by more than 20 national organisations including the British

Medical Association, the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, the Health Education Authority and the Patients' Association, the BDA said that none of the claims stood up to scientific scrutiny.

No evidence of damage to bones or joints caused by fluoride had been found, or of a link with cancer, the association said. Research on its impact on the immune system was seriously flawed and there was no

evidence that it increased the risk of stillbirth or of Down's syndrome in babies.

The association cited a 1978 report by the United States Consumers' Union which concluded: "The survival of this fake controversy represents one of the major triumphs of quackery over science in our generation." It added that the statement was "as true today as it was in 1978."

Mike Lennon, professor of

dental public health at the University of Liverpool and chairman of the British Fluoridation Society, said: "Scaremongering of this sort is a real threat to public health. There is no doubt about the safety of fluoride at the levels to which humans are exposed."

Dr June Crown, president of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, said the anti-fluoride lobby trivialised the problem of tooth decay. One in three chil-

dren living in deprived areas of Liverpool has a gas anaesthetic for tooth extraction before the age of five, which is avoidable, unpleasant and a financial drain on the National Health Service, she said.

"Fluoride - in toothpaste and water - is safe and effective, and is acknowledged to be the single most significant factor in the widespread reduction in tooth decay rates since the Seventies," she said.

John Graham, a spokesman for the National Pure Water Association's London branch, said there was a mass of evidence linking excess fluoride with a range of adverse effects. "The medical establishment's answer is to fit earplugs. If they had a case they would not flinch from debating the issue with us. Fluoride is more toxic than lead. If someone offered you a toothpaste containing lead, you'd think twice about it."

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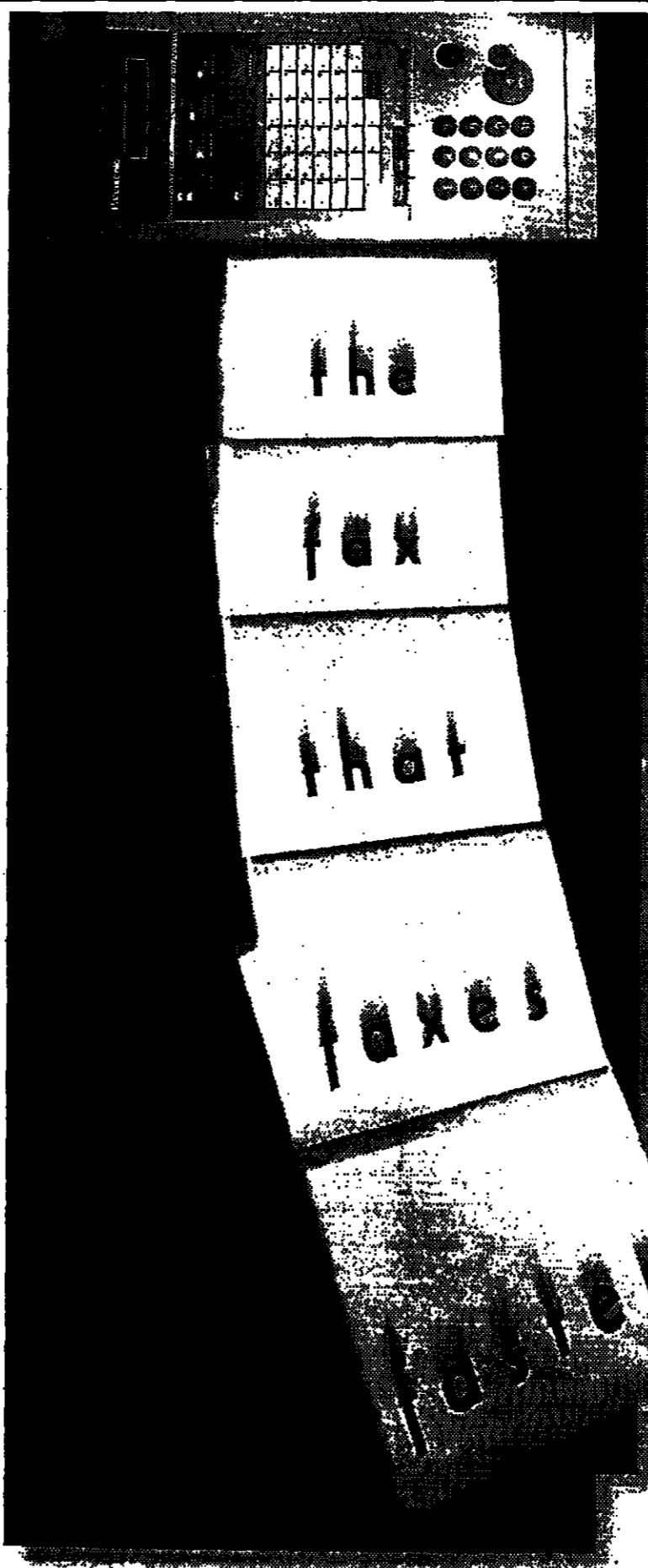
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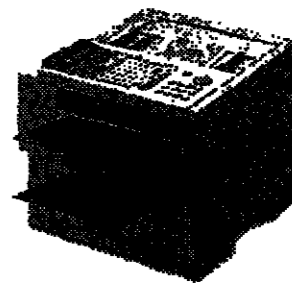
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No access: Zoe Palmer outside Thurston primary in Suffolk, where the cost of alterations has closed the gates against her Photograph: Chris Grieve

## Council defends decision to bar disabled girl from school

Jojo Moyes

A county council which told the parents of a disabled child that their daughter would not be able to attend the same school as her friends yesterday defended its decision, but offered her a glimmer of hope.

The parents of three-year-old Zoe Palmer, who suffers from spinal muscular atrophy, were told by Suffolk County Council that she could not attend Thurston Primary School, along with her friends from playgroup, because it could not afford the necessary alterations.

Richard Robinson, the council's spokesman, said that Suffolk had a budget of £10,000 for special needs improvements to 135 schools, and could not afford to spend 70 per cent of that on the chair lift and ramps that the council said the school would need.

The decision was criticised by Zoe's parents, who said that they had already raised £4,500 for an electric chair, and that they should not have to raise more money to get her into her local school. "All she wants to do is go to the same school as all her friends in the village," Zoe's mother, Juliet, 27, said.

But yesterday Mr Robinson said that Thurston school itself could apply to the Government for access grants, and that if it could raise the money, the council would not object "in principle".

"We strive as much as we can to ensure that every parent gets their child to go to the school they want to," he said. "This girl has another 15 months, another financial year to go before she even has to go to school. It's still very early, there's a lot of mileage."

But he warned that even if Zoe Palmer were able to go to Thurston Primary School, she would eventually be faced with the same problem. "The primary school have said that whereas they would love to have the girl at their school, at age nine she would still have to break off from her friends to go to another school because Thurston's middle school has no access," he said, adding that the alternative schools the council had suggested were nearby and had good wheelchair access.

Zoe Palmer's parents could not be reached for comment on Mr Robinson's remarks yesterday.

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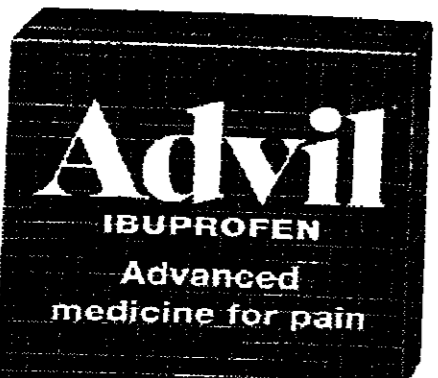
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# Scrap 'parent power' reforms say teachers

Judith Judd  
Education Editor

Leaders of the biggest teachers' union yesterday challenged the Government to reverse key "parent power" reforms of the last 15 years.

The National Union of Teachers wants an end to the publication of league tables and power over school admissions returned to local authorities. Local councils, not parents, it said, should have the right to determine the future of the remaining grammar schools.

The union's package of proposals for the Government's forthcoming education White Paper will bring it into conflict with ministers.

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, has said the publication of examination league tables, designed to help parents choose schools, will continue and that the fate of existing grammar schools will be decided by a parental vote. He has said the Office for Standards in Education, (Ofsted) which oversees school inspections, will remain.

Under the union's plans, schools would set their own targets and be inspected by local authorities. If they failed to meet their targets, they would have to explain why. Local authorities would be inspected by Ofsted.

Publication of league tables would cease. Instead, local authorities would give parents information about schools' success in meeting targets.

Doug McAvoy, the union's general secretary, denied that the proposals would undermine parent power.

"Parents don't have power over admissions now. It's a myth that you can choose a school for your child."

He also contested the view that the union's ideas conflicted with Mr Blunkett's: "I don't think we start worlds apart. I don't accept that these proposals are inconsistent with what Mr Blunkett has said."

However, he agreed that the union and the Government took different views over selection. "Our view is that there should be no selection. It is not consistent of the Labour gov-

ernment to agree that there should be no more selection and at the same time say nothing about selection where it exists."

Mr McAvoy rejected the idea put forward by local authority leaders that teachers should be judged by their children's success in meeting performance targets.

"You cannot take pupils' achievement as a measure of a teacher's competence or capability," he said. "The purpose of targets set for schools ought to be to give teachers an incentive, not as a tool for management to identify weaknesses."

Mr Blunkett will today announce an extra £5.5m for the careers service. He will tell the Careers Service National Association they should use the money to target 16-year-olds who leave schools without qualifications and those who end up on the wrong courses and drop out. Mr Blunkett is anxious to cut out the waste which occurs because young people fail or fail to complete, vocational courses or A-levels. One survey estimated that the cost was around £500m.

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# McLibel Two hope to taste victory as whopper trial comes to an end



**Legal eagles:** Dave Morris and Helen Steel sitting in their office among the mountain of files accumulated during their defence of the libel action Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Judge will take an hour to read out summary of 1,000-page findings

**Patricia Wynn Davies**  
Legal Affairs Editor

The fabled *McLibel* trial, the longest of any kind in English legal history and three times as long as any English libel case, is finally reaching a conclusion. It will take Mr Justice Bell an hour simply to read out a summary of his 1,000-page judgment later this week.

In fact, and unbeknownst to most, this mammoth 313-day trial has not been one label action but two. In what could turn out to be a neat legal move, the doughy Dave Morris and Helen Steel, veterans of the struggles over the miners' strike, Wapping and the poll tax, counterclaimed for libel against the mighty McDonald's Corporation.

tion's big guns, it became increasingly clear that this was not to be the trial lasting a few weeks that the corporation had been banking on.

Perhaps the most curious aspect of all, however, is the experience of another campaigning group, the Nottingham-based Veggies. Veggies became the main distributors of the leaflet. After a legal complaint from McDonald's the group made some slight amendments but was then free to continue distribution – more than 2 million in all.

Ms Steel, whose name aptly matches the force of her opinions, says: "London Green-

ported each other in times of crisis and exhaustion.

But in truth they were never that ordinary. Mr Morris, who had to juggle the demands of the case with caring for his eight-year-old son, Charlie, says: "We are both experienced campaigners. We know when people are determined to fight they can square up to the most unfavourable odds."

Of the list of offensive characteristics of McDonald's – and, as Ms Steel points out, all the other burger chains – the billions spent on promoting high-fat, low-fibre food was one of the worst in the eyes of the McLibel Two.

But there is a wider aspect. "McDonald's are symbolic of the way the current economic situation is going globally — their whole approach to food, employment, packaging. To me they are a company that has to be challenged if people are going to challenge the domination of our lives by multinational corporations," she says.

But Britain's libel laws mean that opposing the multinational giants is a perilous task. Ms Steel invokes a House of Lords ruling that laid down that councils could not sue for libel because of the "chilling" effect on freedom of speech. "Multinational companies have as much if not more influence in society today as governmental bodies and are far less accountable."

If he loses the case they plan to argue before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, a multinational tribunal should not have the power to sue unless it can show that the defendant knew he was publishing fabricated information.

Mr Morris says: "I think that libel laws are being used as a form of mass censorship in this country. Mass because every paper, every film, is subject to libel checks by lawyers who are not even checking any more to see if the information is legitimate or defensible, but whether it may lead to a writ. And it's in secret because the public don't know what's going on. So it's mass, secret, censorship."

peace was the start of a worldwide campaign. They thought that by attacking people involved with London Greenpeace over all the issues in the fact-sheet, they would get an apology and then effectively the campaign would be stopped."

Things have only got worse for the ultra image-conscious company, despite the fact that it could easily afford the millions of dollars it has spent on the litigation. McInformation Network, an international network of volunteers, claims its McSpotlight Internet site, containing 19,000 pages of official court transcript, has been accessed nearly 9 million times.

As "ordinary" people living near the poverty line (separately - they have never been an "item") often caution about the finer, and often crucial, points of legal procedure and pitted against McDonald's silver-tongued QC, Richard Rampton, Ms Steel and Mr Morris sur-

The McDonald's writs were issued in 1990, several years after a little-circulated *What's Wrong With McDonald's* leaflet issued by London Greenpeace (no relation to the worldwide Greenpeace environmental organisation) first appeared.

The leaflet contained a series of allegations about the "junk" nature of McDonald's products and its alleged exploitation of resources, workers and animals. As the trial loomed amid a mountain of paperwork and after 28 pre-trial hearings, McDonald's issued 300,000 leaflets and press releases attacking the leaflet as lies. The fines for the battle of the leaflets were drawn.

"The hypocrisy of it," says an affronted Mr Morris, 43, who admits to trying McDonald's milk shakes about 15 years ago until he learnt the amount of sugar they contained.

Ms Steel, 31, and Mr Morris became defendants in person, without legal aid and unjustly *they say, deprived of a jury. But* as they set about calling a succession of witnesses – including a string of nutritional experts and one of a number of private investigators hired by McDonald's to infiltrate London Greenpeace – and conducting detailed cross-examinations of the coroners,

# Council over h

**Glenda Cooper**  
Social Affairs Correspondent

A local authority which hived off old people's homes to a private company wasted almost half a million pounds in one year.

The district auditor's report found that Hertfordshire County Council had had to secure repayments of £400,000 from Quantum Care, a not-for-profit organisation set up by the council itself, following checks on the accounts.

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The Hertfordshire Nursing and Residential Care Association, which represents the private sector, last year sought a public interest report to look at weaknesses in the arrangements the council had made with Quantum Care for "securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources".

In 1994-5, £13.5m was paid to Quantum Care under the terms of the contract which obliged the council to purchase at least

# 400,000 sell-off

A spokesman for HNRCA said that the association hoped the council would look again at the contract that they have with Quantum Care. "If this £400,000 had been available, how many more people in Hertfordshire could have received services which were not available because of financial restraints?"

However, Bill Ogley, chief executive of Hertfordshire County Council said: "The teething problems of the transfer have not in any way disad-

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## Council lost £400,000 over homes sell-off

**Glenda Cooper**  
Social Affairs Correspondent

A local authority which hived off old people's homes to a private company wasted almost half a million pounds in one year.

The district auditor's report found that Hertfordshire County Council had had to secure repayments of £400,000 from Quantum Care, a not-for-profit organisation set up by the council itself, following checks on the accounts.

The Hertfordshire Nursing and Residential Care Association, which represents the private sector, last year sought a public interest report to look at weaknesses in the arrangements the council had made with Quantum Care for "securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources".

In 1994-5, £13.5m was paid to Quantum Care under the terms of the contract which obliged the council to purchase at least

A spokesman for HNRCA said that the association hoped the council would look again at the contract that they have with Quantum Care. "If this £400,000 had been available, how many more people in Hertfordshire could have received services which were not available because of financial restraints?"

However, Bill Ogley, chief executive of Hertfordshire County Council said: "The teething problems of the transfer have not in any way disad-


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## news



Knockout blow: Jane Couch, women's welterweight champion, training at a gym near Bristol, Avon, yesterday; she has been refused a licence to fight in Britain. Photograph: David Howells

## Woman with a winning punch who is barred from boxing

Kathy Marks

Jane Couch holds the women's world welterweight boxing title. She has fought at major events in America and in Europe, appearing on the same bill as some of the biggest names in men's boxing. But in her home country, she is effectively barred from professional competition.

The British Boxing Board of Control (BBBC), the sport's governing body, has always refused to license women, citing medical grounds. Without a licence, female professionals cannot compete at men's fights – the events that attract the promoters and the sponsorship money.

Couch, 28, has decided to provoke a showdown with the BBBC, which she accuses of being stuck in a chauvinistic time warp. Last week she applied for a licence, knowing she would be turned down. Now she plans to launch a court action, claiming

restriction of trade and sexual discrimination. "It's ridiculous that I'm a world champion and I can't fight in Britain," said Couch, known as the "Fleetwood Assassin", after her Lancashire home town.

In the United States and in much of Europe, particularly France, Germany and Scandinavia, women's boxing is regarded as a legitimate sport and is followed avidly on television. Some experts suggest that women are more vulnerable to head injuries than men, but others point out that they also throw a less-heavy punch. A recent meeting of the World Boxing Council's medical panel was told that the sport is no more dangerous for women than for men.

However, John Morris, general secretary of the BBBC, remains unconvinced. "There is the question of pregnancy, and of whether women should box

during their... periods," he said. "Our doctors are ambivalent."

The board, which is taking legal advice on Couch's court action, has no plans to conduct any research on the subject. Mr Morris suggested that female professionals should set up their own licensing body.

"A lot of people on my board don't like the idea of women boxing and getting their faces knocked around," he said. "I may be old-fashioned, but neither do I. And just imagine the outcry if a woman got badly hurt."

Couch, naturally, scoffs at such sentiments, saying she has only ever suffered a few cuts and bruises – "nothing worse than you would get down the pub on a Saturday night". For her, the rush of adrenaline is the driving force. "I just love going into that ring," she said. She believes that her sport will eventually receive recognition in Britain and was heartened by the Amateur Box-

ing Association's decision last year to allow women and girls to fight. But for professionals, the only British events in which they can participate are all-female fights, which are rarely staged because of scant interest from promoters and the shortage of high-calibre women.

Pauline Dickson, of the Association of Women Boxers, is circumspect. "You can't expect things to change overnight," she said. "But women's boxing is a hot potato that no one really wants to take responsibility for."

Couch, who started boxing two and a half years ago, won the world title last May in Copenhagen. She will defend it in August in Connecticut, on the same bill as Montell Griffin, the World Boxing Council light-heavyweight champion.

But for the moment, her aggression is directed at the BBBC. "They've got a fight on their hands," she said.

## Spot drug tests for children of nine

Patricia Wynn Davies

Would-be football stars as young as nine are being randomly tested for drugs at the 147 centres of excellence across England & Wales.

Alan Hodson, of the Football Association's drugs control programme, told the Association of Chief Police Officers' national drugs conference that 10,000 youngsters aged between nine and 16 could be tested in unannounced spot checks at any of the centres.

News meanwhile emerged of the latest device by prisoners for getting round drugs tests in jails. Some prisoners have already switched from cannabis to heroin because heroin flushes out of the bloodstream more quickly.

Now, according to last night's BBC Radio 4 *File on 4*, inmates are using a mixture of heroin and paracetamol known as "Two Card" in which the purity level of the drug is reduced so that it becomes undetectable in urine tests. The mix is known as "Two Card" because it often costs two phone cards in prison currency.

Mr Hodson told the ACPO conference in Hinkley, Leicestershire, that it was not unusual for promising teenage footballers to be pestered by drug pushers between five and six times during an evening in night clubs.

"I don't think that we all realise what pressures there are," Mr Hodson said. "When we have got pushers and peddlers bringing things down to £1.50 for a pill, that's pocket money stuff."

The young footballers have their urine samples collected by the Sports Council and analysed at King's College, London. The council bears most of the £230

cost of each test. Any youngster testing positive is then sent to a drugs assessor and must comply with the recommendations in a report, Mr Hodson said.

"They may then be banned from playing until the FA says so and must agree to target tests if they resume playing."

He said that of 500 random tests carried out last season, five were positive – three youths and two professionals.

George Howarth, the Home Office minister, told the conference: "I refuse to accept that drugs have become part of growing up."

"Just one in four young people has taken drugs in the past year and even fewer – just one in seven – has done so in the last month."

"But these figures are too high. The Government is determined to repair those communities damaged by drug use by getting young people into employment and drug users into treatment."

Another speaker at the conference, Professor Howard Parker of Manchester University, called for a drugs-cautioning system for the personal use of cannabis.

"On the other hand, I would like to see drug-driving taken far more seriously."

Prof Parker claimed that some police officers simply disposed of cannabis seized from people because they did not want to deal with the paperwork.

Although a cautioning system for the personal use of cannabis would effectively decriminalise the drug, Prof Parker said afterwards that he was not in favour of decriminalisation as such.

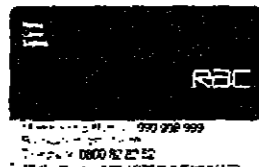
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## news

# The cruel trade that Europe won't ban

Nicholas Schoon  
Environment Correspondent

Britain will this week face a confrontation with its European partners, anxious to avoid a trade dispute with Canada and the US, as it presses ahead with moves to ban the import into Europe of furs from animals caught with steel-jawed leghold traps.

The traps, which can hold an animal held alive for hours with smashed leg bones and other severe wounds, are outlawed in Britain and have long been the target of animal welfare campaigners.

Six years ago, a European directive banned them and halted the import of furs from nations which use the traps.

But the European Commission has never implemented the trade ban for fear of opening a trade war with the main fur exporters, Canada, the US and Russia. As an alternative, the Commission has negotiated a deal on humane trapping standards which would apply both to the exporters and European countries too.



No way out: A mink caught in the steel traps banned in Britain but which are still used by Canadian hunters on species such as the lynx, right



Photograph: Robert Franz/Planet Earth

Environment ministers from European Union states will vote on this deal, covering 19 species of mammal, at their meeting in Luxembourg tomorrow. The matter will be decided by qualified majority

voting, so Britain cannot veto it. But it may find enough allies to block it: Austria and Sweden could side with the UK.

Canada still uses the steel-jawed leghold as a restraining trap (one which keeps its victims

alive) for five species – the raccoon, bobcat, lynx, coyote and wolf. If Europe signs up to the agreement, Canada promises to phase it out within three years.

Looking anxiously is the British fur trade, which has

been trying to persuade the environment minister, Michael Meacher, to drop his opposition to the agreement. Mr Meacher has told them he is too busy for a meeting, although he has met the RSPCA, which sees the

agreement on humane trapping standards as a betrayal of animal welfare.

Although years of campaigning against fur has made the trade almost disappear from Britain's fashion stores, more

than half the international fur trade is handled by British traders, brokers and insurance firms. The British Fur Trade Association says the business is worth around £300m a year.

"It seems crazy to us to think our government wouldn't sign this," said Peter Zeitlin, who leads the association and hails the agreement as "a massive leap forward for animal welfare".

The US and Canada have warned that were Europe to reject the agreement, and then implement the ban on fur imports, it would go to the World Trade Organisation, the international court which decides on trade disputes. If that found against the EU, Europe would have to pay compensation or itself be the target of legitimate trade sanctions from the complainants.

The deal on trapping standards has taken years to negotiate. Along the way, the US has dropped out, saying that because trapping regulations are set by individual states rather than the federal government, it cannot guarantee to implement them.

Now both the European negotiators and those from Canada and Russia say they can go no further: environment ministers have to accept or reject the agreement, but they cannot request amendments. "That would be a mission impossible," said a Commission source.

Under the agreement (see panel), within a few years time, any mechanical trap used to catch animals for pest control or food as well as for fur, must meet basic standards limiting the amount of pain and wounding they cause.

Supporters say it will give a worldwide boost to the development of less cruel traps of all designs. Critics say it is a fudge which sanctions continued use of the horrific leghold traps. It does not cover snares, nor the two species most frequently trapped in Britain – the fox and the rabbit.

The European Commission was itself divided on the issue, with the trade commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan, in favour of the agreement, and the environment commissioner, Ritt Bjerregaard, opposed.

Sir Leon got the backing of most commissioners, so Ms Bjerregaard will advise the environment ministers to accept this week. "She will do her duty," said the commission source. A senior official in the Canadian Foreign Ministry said: "If we get Europe, Canada, Russia and then the US on board, then the rest of the world will follow."

But a spokesman for the Department of the Environment said: "We don't think this agreement goes far enough, so we'll vote against and urge the EU to bring in the trade ban."

## How humane is humane?

Limb amputation, bone and tooth fracture, severe internal organ damage, severing of ligaments and tendons and serious internal or external haemorrhage, are among 14 types of "injuries recognised as indicators of poor welfare in trapped wild animals," according to the international humane trapping standards agreement.

"Self-directed biting, leading to severe injury (self-mutilation), or excessive immobility and unresponsiveness" are also behaviour indicative of poor welfare, says the 31-page treaty. Eighty per cent of animals caught in restraining traps – intended to keep their victims alive – should show none of these indicators of suffering. If the device fails to meet this standard then the trap should be outlawed. And the way to assess its performance on any of the 19 mammal species covered by the agreement, is to test it on at least 20 animals.

The document also sets standards for "killing traps". For most of the 19 species, the victim animal must fall into the state of "unconsciousness and insensibility" which precedes death, within five minutes of being caught.

Again, to be legal, a trap only has to achieve this 80 per cent of the time. And its ability to confirm to the standard has to be assessed by testing on at least 12 animals. Countries party to the agreement have up to five years in which to bring in these standards.

David Bowles, European Campaigner with the RSPCA, is outraged by this five-minute time limit – he says it is far too long. He also condemns the agreement for legalising traps which fail to meet the standards 20 per cent of the time. "It would be good to have a universal agreement on humane trapping standards, but this certainly isn't it," he says. "The standards are far too lax and the European Commission has given in too much to Canada."



Nicholas Schoon

## DAILY POEM

### The Terrible Beauty of Efficiency

By Phoebe Hesketh

Rivington Village post office  
as I knew it sixty years ago  
with its scratched wooden table, ink-well,  
cross-nibbed pen and blotting-paper reflecting  
bucolic signatures,  
its packets of Woodbines  
and jars of spiralling barley-sugar,  
is all changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.

There's a counter smooth with efficiency  
and a shining metal grille  
guarding the new, smart postmistress  
(since the old one was mugged) –  
Oh, so smart you'd never hear her say  
like the other,  
after giving me the wrong stamp  
(which I told her I'd licked),  
"Never mind," as she took it back,  
"It'll dry!"

Phoebe Hesketh was born in 1909 in Preston and published her first collection in 1939. She has lived for most of her life in the Lancashire landscape about which she writes. This poem comes from her new volume, *A Box of Silver Birch*, published by Enitharmon Press (£5.95) at 36 St George's Avenue, London N7 0HD.

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## news

# Plan to make drivers pay for congestion

Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

The Government will produce a consultation paper this autumn on road pricing for motorists in large towns and cities, to tackle pollution and congestion.

A Department of Transport working group has produced a paper which proposes a charge of £4 per vehicle.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister who runs the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, is keen to make the scheme part of a White Paper on the Government's plans to get people out of cars and on to public transport.

The consultation exercise will invite local authorities to produce schemes to reduce traffic and provide money for public transport. The paper would pave the way for wide-ranging powers to be outlined next spring in the transport White Paper. This could be used by local authorities to implement congestion-charging.

A government-funded study in 1995 produced a road pricing study in London that could reduce traffic in central London by 17 per cent, cut accidents by 5 per cent and pollution levels by up to 20 per cent. The report calculated that a city-wide scheme would fund nearly £6bn of public transport schemes.

However, ministers backed away from the idea, as business and freight operators opposed the plans.

Mr Prescott believes industry could be won over with the promise of quicker journeys.

Making people pay to get off the road is likely to be the only way motorists will leave their cars at home.

Yesterday's "Car Free Day" flopped, as motorways and town centres ended up more congested than usual, in spite of pleas to motorists to leave their cars at home and use public transport or cycle to work.

In the South-east, a rail dispute also played a part in the

## Tolls for roads

■ Singapore road-pricing was introduced in 1975 with draconian monitoring of the £1-a-day permits.

■ Oslo is ringed by 17 tolled entrances which allow permit holders to use fast lanes, raising money for public transport.

■ Germany was thwarted by windscreen smart-cards being affected by the sun. Joined France and Italy in investing in a Leicester-based scheme, Eurotoll, under which prices vary according to pollution.

Also, motorists save money if they use public transport.

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Mr Prescott believes industry could be won over with the promise of quicker journeys.

Commuters also faced congestion in the North-east, where the AA reported 36 "travel flashes", instead of the usual 47.

Not all areas were choked by congestion. Some areas, such as Leeds, were a quieter.

The Midlands, Wales and the West Country saw no change and the rush hour in Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff was as busy as ever, with travellers in Exeter facing extra-long journeys after a spate of accidents.

The aim of "Car Free Day" is to persuade people that the quickest, cheapest and most environmentally friendly way of getting from A to B involves cutting the number of vehicles pouring on to the roads.

The Government supported the measures, Glenda Jackson, the transport minister, told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme that "there are alternatives to an over-car dependency".

She then launched a park-and-ride scheme in Reading, Berkshire, part of the town's integrated transport system, which allows commuters to leave their cars on the outskirts and take the bus to the centre.

Ms Jackson said: "These are schemes which the Government strongly support. It has come on stream by a partnership between the local authority and private business... 97 per cent of the people who live in the area strongly endorse the proposals."

"There are obviously other things - like facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, making car parking in the city centre either very expensive, or simply not possible."



No change: An empty bus stuck in London traffic on 'Car Free Day'

Photograph: John Voos

...but will it be too late to save the countryside?

More than four million new households are likely to be formed by 2016, placing even more powerful pressures on the countryside, Jonathan Dimbleby, the president of the Council for Rural England, said yesterday.

He warned that housing and traffic will cover green fields unless something was done and described his message as a "call to action for everyone who cares about the future of rural England".

Mr Dimbleby, famed as a television presenter, was making a parting speech as president at the CPRE's general council. He said: "Three hundred people a day are leaving our major cities for the countryside, showing that not only have we lost confidence in our cities, but we are prepared to tolerate sprawl across our most precious environmental asset - our countryside."

"This is one of the central issues confronting the new Government, to which CPRE is committed to helping find constructive solutions."

"But the big pressures facing the countryside are more powerful than ever, with 4.4 million new households projected to form by 2016, traffic on rural roads predicted to double or even treble by 2025 and a meagre 2 per cent of the huge agricultural budget devoted to environmentally friendly farming."

Praising the success of CPRE Mr Dimbleby said the organisation's efforts had led to:

- out-of-town shopping centres losing favour.
- cuts in the road programme.
- the dropping of plans to relax curbs on outdoor advertising.
- official policy to promote the sympathetic design of new development in the countryside.
- renewed efforts to increasing the share of new housing in towns and cities.

## Oasis drives its fans off the Internet

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

Fear of prosecution has driven fans of the rock band Oasis to remove sound and video clips of the musicians from the Internet, in a case which could have wider repercussions for users of the World Wide Web.

On 5 May, Ignition Management, which runs Oasis, sent an e-mail to hundreds of fans with sites on the Web, warning them that they had a month to remove "copyrighted" material from their sites.

But it was hazy about what material was copyrighted - including pictures, audio and video clips, lyrics and guitar chords. The deadline arrived on 1 June. So far 36 of the hundreds of sites mentioning Oasis have either shut down or removed material.

Some fans suspect that Ignition has decided not to pursue the matter, possibly realising

that its attempts to shut sites have aroused anger but produced no commercial benefit. "I really doubt that they'll come out and say 'All right, we were wrong, we're sorry,'" said Jack Martin, who runs a Web site opposing the "copyright" claims.

If every site carrying Oasis material closes down, then an important precedent may be set. Equally, it may have been unfair for Ignition to demand the removal of the data, which may have been permitted under "fair use" - that is, quotation - aspects of copyright law.

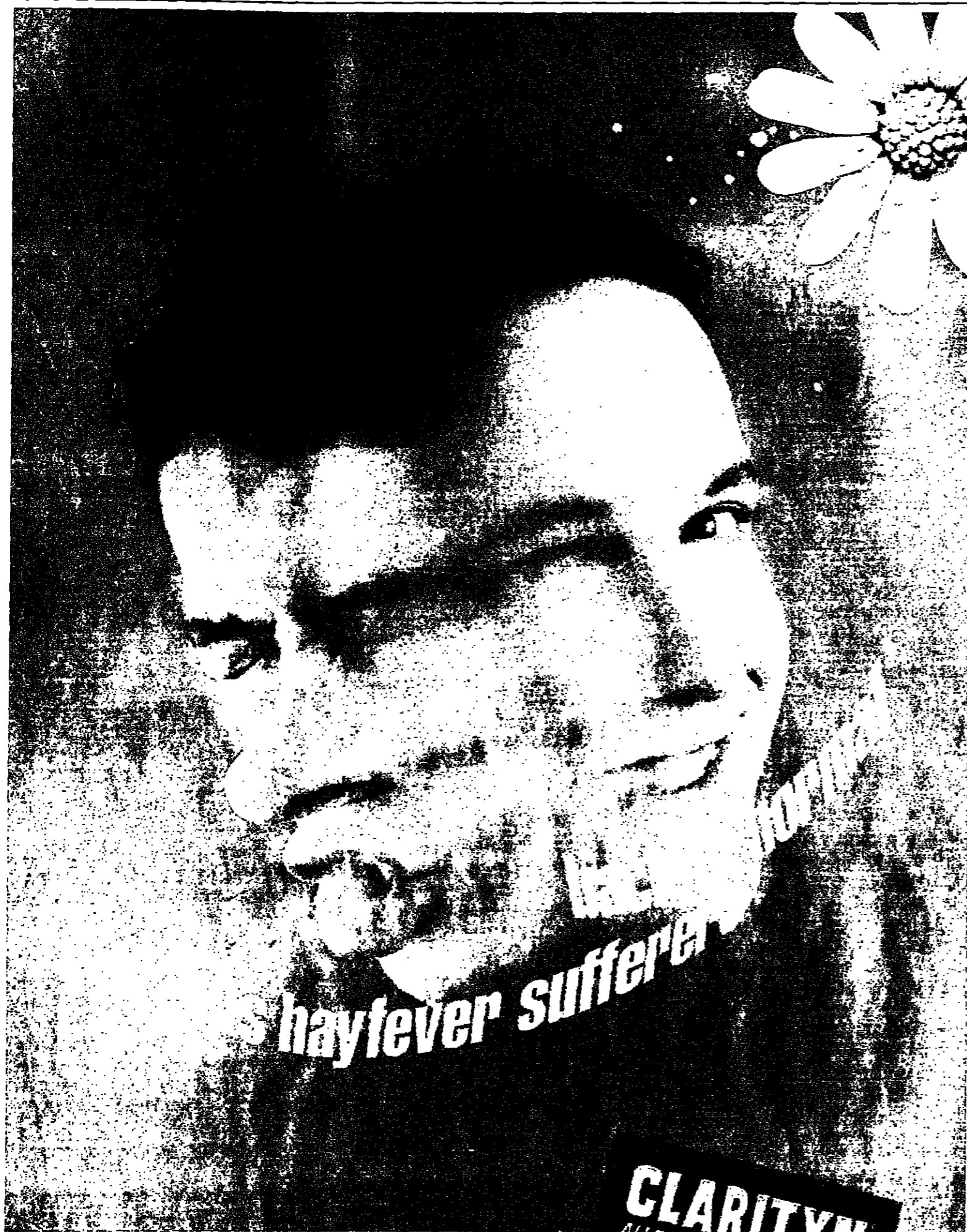
Mr Martin's site, at the University of Kansas in the US, now offers tips to Oasis fans with sites on how to avoid copyright claims by the company.

Since the deadline, Ignition and Creation, the band's record company, have refused to explain what they consider a copyright breach, how many sites are being examined, or when legal action would be taken.

Mr Martin has been unable to get any reaction either. "I can't imagine it would take more than a week or so to look at the sites to see if they'd complied or not," he said. A spokeswoman for Creation said: "The band are very busy, and so are the management."

The reaction of fans has been overwhelmingly negative. Stephen Penna, aged 14, from Redhill in Surrey, disconnected his site from the Web about a week before the deadline.

"I had Oasis sound clips and album and single covers on my site, neither of which anyone from the companies would have liked to be on my site," he told *The Independent*. "I am still a big Oasis fan, and think nothing of them, especially as Noel [Gallagher, lead guitarist] said that he and the band had nothing to do with shutting down fan sites. But Ignition and Creation are just making a big fuss for nothing."



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## amsterdam summit

# Blair steers steady course over treaty

Sarah Helm reports on a late night for leaders

Tony Blair was negotiating deep into last night with European partners, working to finalise the Amsterdam Treaty, which the leaders hope will settle differences over new power-sharing.

As the talks entered their end-game, Mr Blair, attending his first formal European summit, was put to serious test as a player in the European version of multi-dimensional chess.

The outcome of last night's talks will indicate whether Mr Blair is justified in arguing that his new co-operative approach with Europe has strengthened his negotiating hand.

Along with every other leader, Mr Blair was reluctant to cede powers in several areas, but was certain to have to trade off slices of British sovereignty during the course of the night.

As the evening wore on, the top priority for Britain was to block attempts by other member states, led by France and Germany, to commit the union to a common European defence in the new treaty.

Britain fears that giving the European Union powers over defence would eventually turn the union into a military, as well as a political alliance, thereby undermining the role of Nato. Mr Blair was therefore determined last night to remove language from the draft treaty text which suggests that the Western European Union (WEU), Europe's *de facto* defence arm, should become gradually integrated in the EU.

However, at the eleventh hour, the Netherlands, which holds the EU presidency, raised the stakes by suggesting a protocol be attached to the new treaty detailing the three phases

by which the WEU would be incorporated into EU structures.

In its fight against new defence power-sharing, Britain was counting on support from Denmark and four neutral countries - Ireland, Austria, Sweden and Finland. However, it seemed unlikely that Mr Blair would be able to neutralise the Franco-German initiative, and was likely to be forced to accept a compromise.

Britain had already secured its prime Amsterdam objective, maintaining rights over frontier controls, before last night's negotiations began.

As a price for this concession the Government ceded the right of other states to develop a joint immigration and asylum policy.

Last night Mr Blair was still attempting to limit related moves to extend the powers of the European Court to allow judges to oversee decisions on police co-operation and crime fighting. Britain was also hoping to stop moves by other member states to pool sovereignty in civil judicial policy.

British negotiators said last night they expected to "make some progress" on the European Court issue. However, other states remained determined to give a boost to the courts' role and to co-operate more widely in the judicial field.

Mr Blair's hope of securing a firm commitment from partners to curb the practice of fish-quota hopping appeared to be in some doubt, due to objections from Spain.

The highly sensitive move to introduce "flexible decision-making" into EU procedures - whereby some countries can move ahead at a faster pace than others - was another area where Mr Blair was likely to be forced to consider a trade off.

Britain has made clear that it wants the right to veto any move by other groups of countries to pool powers as a one-off group. However, it seemed unlikely that Mr Blair would be able to win partners round.

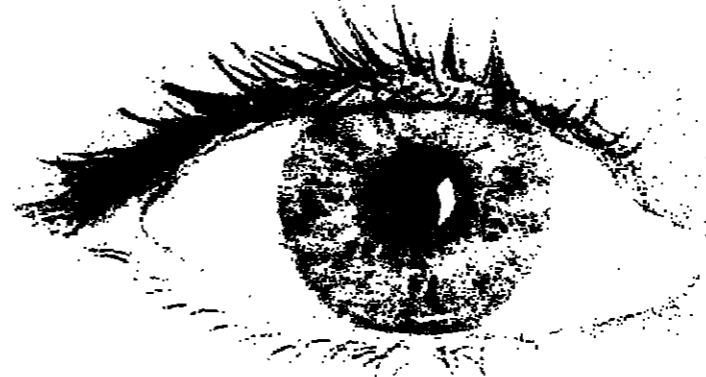
The best he could hope for was to secure agreement that the "flexibility" procedure would not be applied to certain core EU policy areas, such as the single market.

The Prime Minister, who has accepted some extension of qualified majority voting, was still hoping to reduce the list of eleven areas to which other states want the system applied.



Wheeling and dealing: Tony Blair and the Austrian Chancellor, Viktor Klima, on bicycles given to them in Amsterdam yesterday Photograph: Reuters

## They work better together.



### Animal rights

The revised Treaty of Rome enshrines rights for farm animals and provides a boost for environmentalism. It says member states "shall pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals... as sentient beings". But there is a suggestion of an opt-out to protect "religious rites and cultural traditions" which involve cruelty to animals. The words "sustainable development" now appears in the new treaty three times.

## French fudge threatens euro launch

Sarah Helm  
Amsterdam

Just 24 hours after Europe's leaders patched up differences over the single currency, France signalled yesterday that the arguments over the euro rule book are far from over. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the French finance minister, indicated that France will continue to push for a "flexible" interpretation of the Maastricht criteria.

Decisions on which countries meet Maastricht's crucial budget deficit rules, should be based on whether countries are "coming as close as possible" to the ceiling, set at three per cent of gross domestic product, he said.

Mr Strauss-Kahn's comments, at the EU's Amsterdam summit, are certain to fuel new fears in Bonn and London that France is seeking to "fudge" the Maastricht rules, as well as the rules of the German-designed "stability pact", which will enforce fiscal discipline after the euro launch.

Meanwhile, Pierre Moscovici, France's European affairs minister, sparked doubts about economic and monetary union for the second time in a week by saying in a radio interview that Paris would decide whether or not to join the euro after assessing public finances.

After hours of uncertainty, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's spokesman Manuel Valls told reporters in Amsterdam, that Mr Moscovici had spoken out of turn.

"He spoke too quickly. This

is not an expression either of our political will or of a strategy," Mr Valls said. He said the position spelled out several times by Mr Jospin was that France would meet the criteria and deadline set to launch EMU in January 1999. "This will not be done to the detriment of employment and growth," he added.

Under the stability pact rules, any country which does not keep to the three per cent ceiling after the single currency launch becomes subject to near-automatic fines.

In a hard-fought deal, agreed at the Amsterdam summit on Monday, France appeared to step back from confrontation with Bonn over the single currency discipline by agreeing, after all, to accept the "stability pact" with no changes.

Yesterday however, Mr Strauss-Kahn destabilised the fragile new accord by stating in frankest terms yet heard from a European leader that the 3 per cent rules should not be precisely observed.

"The principle is to come close to 3 per cent. Countries must come as close as possible to three per cent and must show that they are on a trend towards three per cent even if they have not achieved it," he said.

Mr Strauss-Kahn can rightly argue that the text of the Maastricht rules do allow for some flexible interpretation. However, to date, it has been largely taboo for Europe's leaders to suggest that they might fudge the final decision.

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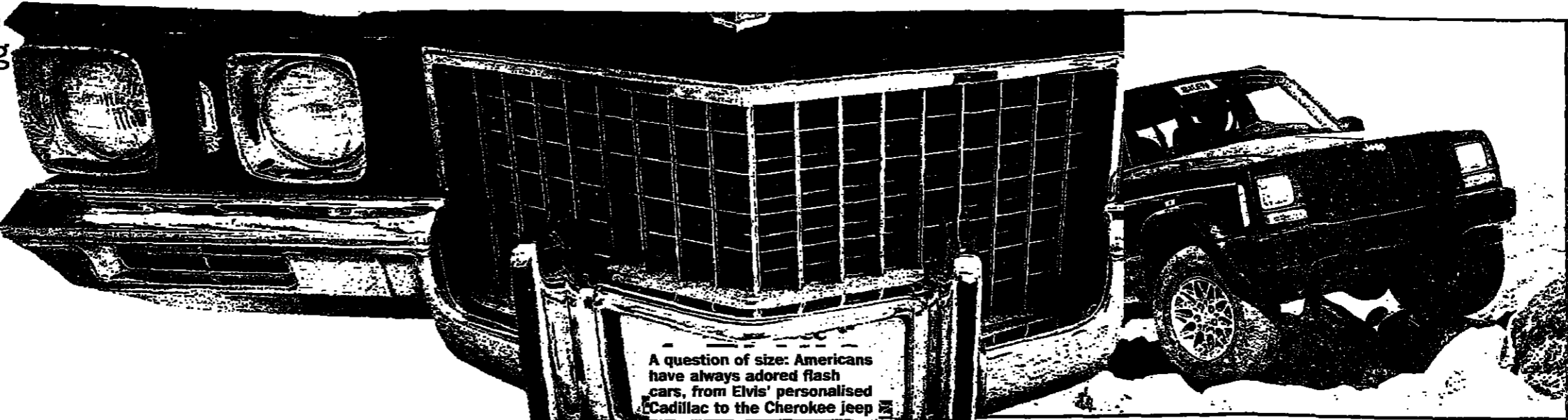
# Big is beautiful again in the US suburbs

David Usborne machines taking

If you thought that the love affair between Americans and their gas-guzzling road-cruisers was over long ago, think again. Tail-fins may not yet be back in fashion, but cars with monster dimensions are once more the national rage.

In fact, these garage-busters are not cars at all. What is drawing buyers to the showrooms in droves are so-called sport utility vehicles that ride high above the road. They have beefy engines, intimidating front-grill fenders and that other feature that is so vital in suburbia, four-wheel drive.

Their conquest of the US roadway – the big American manufacturers like Ford and General Motors simply cannot keep up with demand – is sounding alarm bells among safety groups. In accidents between these Goliaths and flimsy saloons, guess which gets crushed?



Ford apparently sees no limits to the trend. Yesterday came news that it is developing what should be the biggest utility yet – an eight-passenger titan to be called a crew wagon. It will be 19 feet long – compared with

slightly under 15 feet for the Jeep Cherokee – and boast a V-10 engine under the bonnet. The crew wagon will be bigger even than the current bulkiest among hulks, the Chevrolet Suburban. In this correspond-

ent's neighbourhood the Suburbans rule everywhere except in one street. Here there is a resident with the biggest status-symbol-on-wheels available anywhere – the Hummer, a derivative of military vehicle that

might have been designed to cross the Himalayas. At Universal Ford, a sprawling dealership just across the East River from Manhattan in Queens, Frank Thomas confirms the passion for size. "The

bigger they are and the larger the engine-size, the more I sell," he said yesterday. "I love it." For every five large-saloon Taurus models he sells, he will shift 30 of the four-wheel-drive Ford Explorers.

"It's totally about ego," Mr Thomas says of his customers. "I look at their backgrounds and their credit histories and it's obvious that there is absolutely no practical point in them buying these vehicles."

They think that they are going out on safari or something when in fact the largest obstacle they are likely to meet around here is a runaway shopping trolley.

An additional, somewhat ironic, attraction of these brutes is that their size means that they can no longer be described as small cars by the government. They thus escape both luxury taxes and federal regulations on fuel consumption.

There will be no limits on how much these vehicles can drink – which is a good thing. Most can manage only 14 miles a gallon.

The safety disadvantage that the rest of us find ourselves in on the road was highlighted by a study released last week by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

It noted that in fatal accidents involving a car and a light truck, which includes pick-ups and sport utilities, 80 per cent of those who died were riding in the cars.

That is a statistic, however, that may only quicken the stampede for the utilities. Have one of these parked outside your house and not only are you the meanest SOB on the block, your kids are likely to be the safest, too.

And who worries about fuel efficiency when you are living in a country where a gallon of petrol sells for less money than a gallon of designer mineral water?

## Clinton to offer Africa a new deal

Mary Dejevsky  
Washington

The United States is to embark on a major initiative on Africa, designed to shift the focus of policy from aid and development towards trade and investment.

The policy, whose key word is "partnership", was presented by President Bill Clinton with great fanfare from the White House yesterday and concludes months of consideration in the US Administration about how and whether the US should play a greater role in the continent.

Last year, the then Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, made the first tour of Africa by a US official of that rank and Mr Clinton's wife, Hillary, and daughter, Chelsea, toured investment and aid projects in several African countries this spring.

The announcement of the Africa initiative came as the US was making final preparations for the annual summit of the Group of Seven industrialised countries – this year called the Summit of the Eight because it includes Russia – which opens on Friday in Denver, Colorado. The timing was seen in Washington as a move by the US to pre-empt criticism from other G7 countries, notably France,

that it was not doing as much as it could to assist developing countries in general, and African countries in particular.

Last year, US overseas aid fell below the level of France for the first time. However, yesterday's announcement was also seen as an attempt to concentrate discussions at Denver, where a session will be devoted to Africa, on the successes among African states that have adopted free market principles. Last year, these countries achieved an average growth rate of 5 per cent.

Analysts said the US might also be concerned to divert attention away from what one called "the few" African countries experiencing civil strife.

They noted that France, and perhaps some other G7 members might see Mr Clinton's initiative as an attempt to steer summit discussions away from their concerns about stemming poverty and resolving conflicts in Africa. The five-point initiative includes the redirection of already agreed funds towards infrastructure projects, among them telecommunications – and backing for private investment. The US will also implement a debt reduction agreement that was reached in February, to lessen the debt burden on the poorest African countries.

## significant shorts

### Paedophile hunt gains momentum in France

A gendarmerie spokesman announced the arrest of 120 suspects yesterday after some 2,500 gendarmes fanned out across France in a crackdown on paedophile video fans. 14 months of investigation led gendarmes to a mail-order company in Macon selling pornographic films involving boys. The para-military police intended to search the homes of 800 people whose names were found on the company mailing list. France's first major paedophilia trial opened in Paris on Monday, with 71 Frenchmen facing charges of organising or subscribing to a network selling pornographic films involving boys. Reuters - Paris

### Congo truce offers respite

The warring parties in the Congo Republic's capital Brazzaville agreed to a three-day truce and a demilitarisation of the international airport, a focus of fighting in the city, the French ambassador said. Reuters - Brazzaville

### Rabbis charged over drugs

US federal prosecutors said two Orthodox rabbis in New York were charged with channelling \$1.75m (£1m) in Colombian drug trafficking profits through the bank accounts of a yeshiva and a synagogue. Authorities accused the rabbis of financing the purchase of a multi-million dollar airplane for the drug traffickers. AP - New York

### Jordan dismayed by US vote

Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan has said promises of \$100m in US aid have been tarnished by Congress's vote to move the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. Jordanian newspapers quoted the crown prince as saying Washington had allocated as much money to moving the embassy as it had to Jordan's aid increase. Reuters - Amman

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# Hong Kong 香港 handover

## Media faces stupefying choice at biggest ever gathering

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

As Hong Kong's D-Day approaches, the authorities have unveiled a 9,000 square metre media centre, erected to house the biggest ever gathering of journalists for a single political

event. More than 8,000 journalists are expected in the colony for the handover to Chinese rule on 30 June. How this invasion of mild-mannered and patient people will be handled when push comes to much shoving, remains to be seen.

If the authorities have it their way, the reporters will spend most of their time attending more than 70 events organised for their benefit. The world press is being invited to visit various factories, hear briefings on the financial system, the transport system,

local government, trade and the "wetland habitat" of Mai Po, and join a tour of historic monuments. Only one of the briefings, in fact, is related to the handover of sovereignty. The media representatives will be able to raise themselves from the stupor induced by

these events by rummaging through the smart shoulder bags which have been given to all accredited reporters, and which contain everything from free camera film to T-shirts, baseball caps and coupons for free courier delivery.

The total cost of this largesse,

which also extends to the provision of Internet services, computers, photocopyers and archive footage for television stations, is £700,000. As is usual in Hong Kong, this sum was raised through commercial sponsorship. Japan tops the list of coun-

tries sending the highest number of journalists, with applications from 1,300 people. The United States is second with 1,000 and Britain, the outgoing colonial power, is third with 700. The BBC alone will be sending almost 200 journalists. Hong Kong's lively media will

be represented by 2,800 journalists. Stephen Lam, the civil servant responsible for co-ordinating the handover ceremony, seems to have a policy of not answering controversial questions directly. So far, he has had a fairly easy ride. But the media torrent has not yet begun.

## Fear of the future may spark exodus

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

The last comprehensive survey of Hong Kong attitudes before the end of British rule shows that economic confidence continues to rise steadily, although political pessimism is also on the increase.

These findings are contained in the latest Hong Kong Transition Project survey, released yesterday and conducted this month, as part of a decade of research on changing attitudes towards the colony's transfer to Chinese rule.

Michael De Golyer, the project director, says the survey puts a new perspective on studies which show Hong Kong people are confident about the future and have few misgivings about Chinese rule. He believes the mood is increasingly one of feeling that there is no choice. "That's a lot different from being optimistic," he insists.

The survey identifies a growing gap in attitudes between men and women and the young and old. Older men are much more enthusiastic about the return to Chinese rule than women and young people.

Dr De Golyer believes the new government will be dominated by "older males, born in China. These are the people who have views very different from most other people in society".

The bottom line, according to the survey, is that a solid 40 per cent of the population would try to leave Hong Kong if unsuitable changes occurred under the new

### Little red songbook

Betty Tung, wife of Hong Kong's future leader Tung Chee-hwa, has unveiled a song "The Homecoming" composed to celebrate Hong Kong's reversion to Chinese rule.

"The beautiful sun of July shines forth on Hong Kong. The pride of homecoming will forever be carved in my heart."

Every Chinese heart is filled with joy. Leaving goodbye with heads held high to the hundred years.

From tomorrow the future is limitless. Let the sun shine everywhere, countless people united in one.

Hand in hand, for Hong Kong, unity is the direction.

Wisdom of the motherland, Hong Kong people's perseverance.

Together we realise one country, two systems.

regime. Few people cite economic reasons as a reason for departure, while most identify issues connected to civil liberties.

The survey shows the majority of the population is content to wait and see what happens but Dr De Golyer predicts that "if China fails on this, it looks as though a very large percentage of the Hong Kong people will head out".

The survey is bad news for Hong Kong's new leadership. Governor Chris Patten enjoys a total satisfaction rating of 57 per cent, slightly down on the 62 per cent he scored in February. However, Hong Kong's

new leader, Tung Chee-hwa, trails with a satisfaction rating of 50 per cent, down on the 53 per cent he got last February.

Dissatisfaction with the Chinese government is high, with 51 per cent of those questioned giving a negative verdict, though this is nothing like the 64 per cent dissatisfaction rating recorded in 1994.

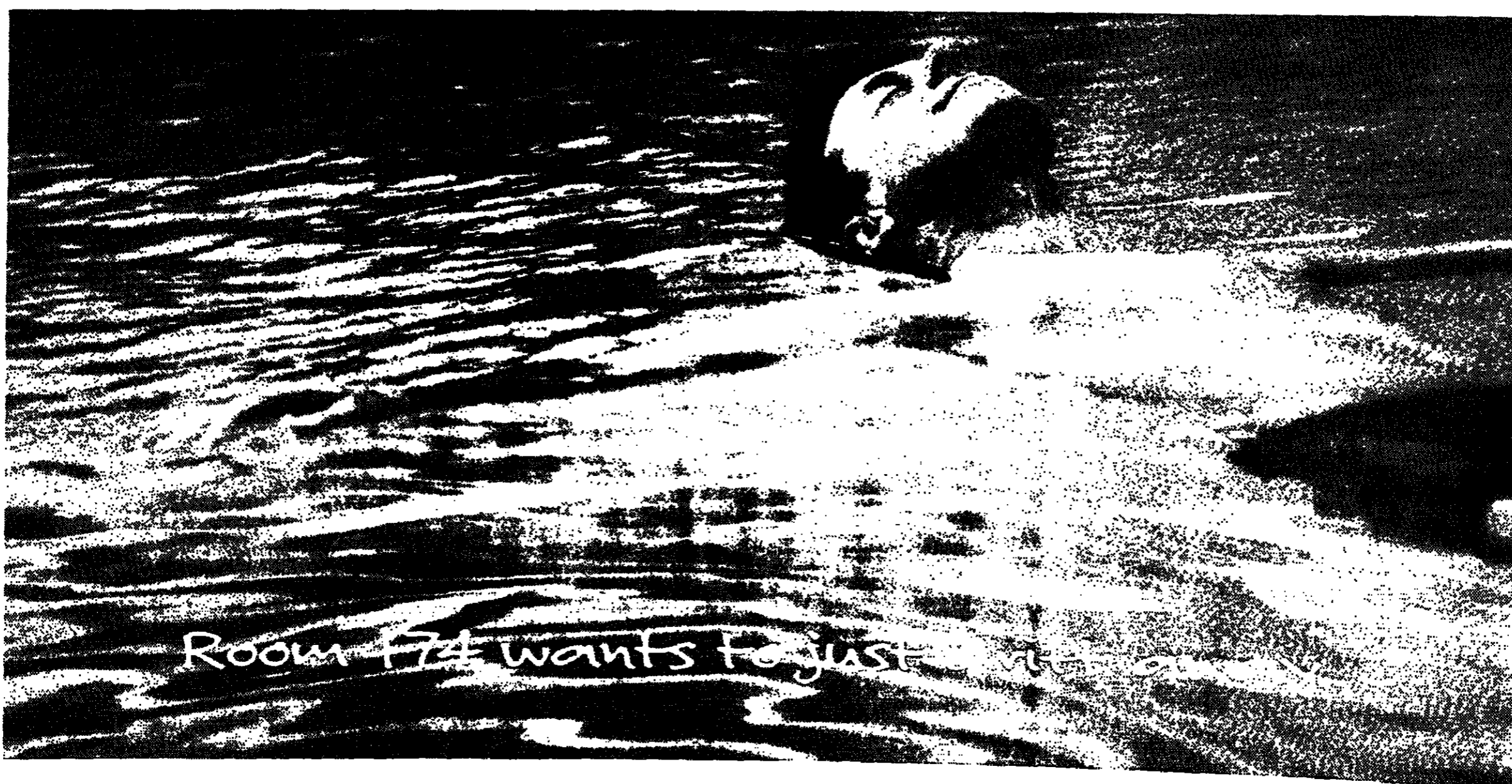
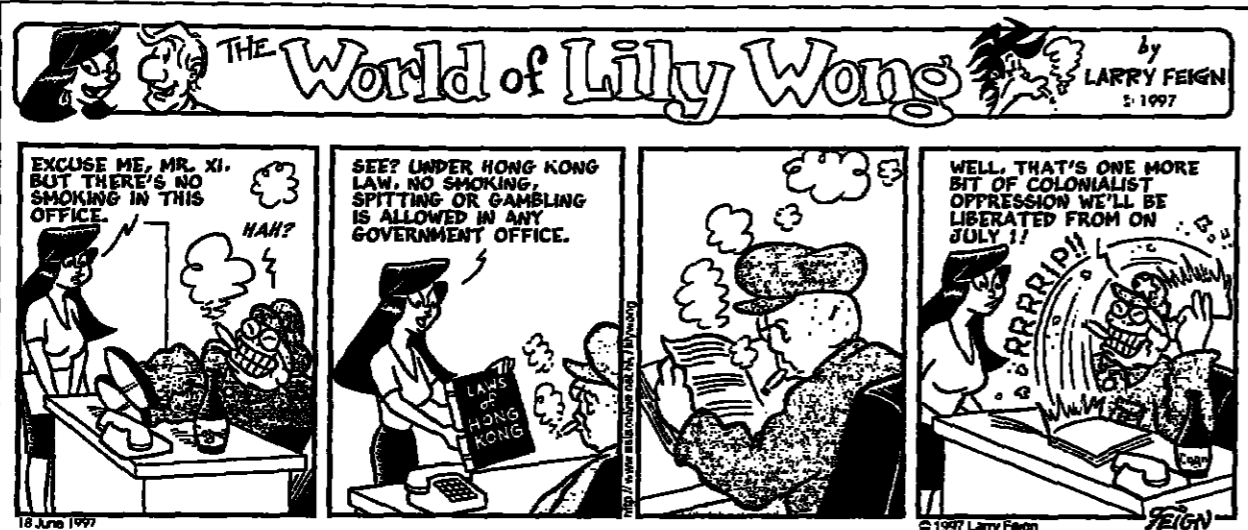
The news for members of the China-appointed Provisional Legislature is worse. Only 7 per cent of those questioned thought it would "best protect Hong Kong people's interests". Confidence in the existing elected legislature, which will be abolished after China takes over, was much higher, with 47 per cent of respondents turning to its members for protection.

The new administration's decision to scrap all elected tiers of government was reinforced with an announcement that although members of local government would be allowed to remain in office, the pro-democracy group would be outnumbered by the appointment of 116 new members, most of whom support Peking.

This addition will make the largely powerless local government bodies even more likely to follow the wishes of the new administration. This was illustrated yesterday when the Urban Council turned down an application to hold a democracy rally on 1 July, the first day of Chinese rule, on the grounds that the space in one of the territory's biggest parks was required for a gathering of women's groups, even though they had applied later.



Up in arms: A Black Watch soldier rehearsing a Highland dance over crossed swords in Hong Kong yesterday, in advance of a farewell military concert to mark the handover of the colony to China at the end of the month. Photograph: Reuters



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# Hong Kong 香港 handover

## New Shanghai swings to the old rhythms

**A**t The Gap restaurant in central Shanghai, no expense has been spared to create the sort of cosmopolitan atmosphere expected in China's style capital. The food may be strictly Chinese, but there are red London phone boxes, walls covered with reproduction Gauguin murals, waitresses in American Country and Western checked shirts and private dining rooms where, surrounded by copies of Milla and Stubbs masterpieces, you can treat your business partners to a feast of Shanghai's famous "hairy crab" specialities for 10,000 yuan (£760) a throw (drinks extra).

The Filipino band offers Kool and the Gang cover versions, until at 9.30pm the resident troupe of sing-song girls - that potent symbol of old Shanghai - takes to the stage to the tune of "Alexander's Ragtime Band". Ask the supervisor how he would describe the style theme for this cultural minestrone, and he answers bizarrely: "It's Luxembourg."

Shanghai's vibrant spirit is back, with all its blithe excesses, and the Shanghaiese who are making the most of it. As Hong Kong prepares to revert to China on 1 July, Shanghai is doing its best to make sure that it can hold its own against its brash cousin. Once again the city is a magnet for the young and ambitious - including Hong Kongers, for whom it offers new opportunities.

Kenny Tang, 33, is typical of Hong Kong Shanghaiese who are coming back to the city which their parents fled in 1949, when the Communists took control. This year he opened the YingYang jazz club in a basement which used to store electronic goods. "I want to make Shanghai like it was 60 years ago, a great city," he says. "But a great city needs culture and more artists."



**Teresa Poole on the Chinese city which is reinventing itself under communism's glare**

Shanghai's new restaurants and bars are packed, and most of the customers are locals. But it is not just the night life which gives Shanghai the feel of a re-emerging world city; economic reform has spurred a cultural renaissance. Last autumn, the stunning new £45m Shanghai Museum opened in the centre of People's Square, in a Chinese-designed building which resembles an ancient bronze ding vessel. In December, it was the turn of the new Shanghai Library, with storage for 10 million books. Under construction is a flamboyant French-designed opera house, which will be the largest in Asia, and a massive cantilevered sports stadium.

It has all happened in a belated rush. Until 1990, Shanghai was in the slow lane of Chinese reform, overtaken by southern China. Then came the central government's decision to develop the Pudong

zone on the east bank of Shanghai's river as China's future financial centre. Foreign investment poured in, and the construction boom has been so overwhelming that since 1991 the city has been sinking by half an inch a year, twice the rate during the Eighties. Here, too, Shanghai cannot help but vie with Hong Kong, with an official "three-phase action plan" to be China's national financial centre before 2000, Asia's regional financial hub by 2005, and a global financial centre in 2010. There are currently about 9,000 building projects.

The younger generation is thriving, with lives reinvented just as swiftly as the skyline. Lin Dongfu, 40, gave up teaching to be a reporter for *Real Estate Information*, and then found fame hosting a popular TV game show, *Test Your Talent*. Along the way he became the "voice" for Sean Connery and Gregory Peck when their films were

dubbed into Chinese. His great passion now is his bar, Blues and Jazz. "Shanghai - we call it an international city, but we are still short of things," said Mr Lin. But less so than before. "Five years ago, there were no jazz bars in Shanghai." Now there are a dozen, and not only for foreigners. "Chinese also come; they cannot enjoy the music very deeply, but in time..."

At the YingYang, Mr Tang agreed that Shanghaiese preferred jazz to rock and roll. "Shanghai people are more sentimental and educated than Pekingers," he said. They are also brimming with self-confidence, even arrogance. Professor Shen Weibin, a 60-year-old history professor at Fudan University, explained: "Shanghai people think that if you want to succeed, you have to come to Shanghai for a while and be recognised here," said Professor Shen. Or as Mr Tang put it: "Shanghaiese think that peo-

ple from other Chinese cities are like peasants."

Success is again something to be flaunted - just like Hong Kong. Joining the Shanghai Race Club was the status symbol of old Shanghai; nowadays it might be a \$94,000 (£57,000) life membership of the new Taiwan-financed Tomson Golf Course where, according to the hype, the bunkers are filled not with sand but with pulverised white marble.

With this revival, however, has also come uncertainty. The excitement and glamour are back, but so are old social problems. Mr Shen has witnessed the city's ups and downs and describes the mood of Shanghai people these days as "hope mixed with doubts".

The contradictions are everywhere to see: a hardline municipal communist government is determined to maintain control over a capitalist eruption which is enriching half the pop-

ulation while throwing hundreds of thousands of state enterprise workers on to the scrap heap.

A yawning wealth gap has opened up between those fashionably dressed Shanghaiese and the legions of newly sacked textile workers. Unemployment among the population of 14 million is chronic as near-bankrupt state enterprises jettison staff, especially older people who find it difficult to adjust.

Zhu Junyi, director of the Shanghai Labour Bureau, has admitted a further 750,000 city workers are expected to be laid off in the next four years. Meanwhile, about three million migrant workers have flooded into town, the work fodder for a city which is being rebuilt by men with spades.

Looming over these contradictions is the might of the Shanghai Communist government. Behind the superficial "anything goes" atmosphere, the

old apparatus is still firmly entrenched. The glistening 12-storey New World City department store, for instance, boasts of itself as "the aircraft carrier in the shopping sea". But venture on to the 9th floor administration area and the corridors are lined with doors marked "Communist Youth League", "Party Committee", "Trade Union Committee", and on and on.

Freedom of thought is no more welcome in this neon-dazzled city than anywhere else in China, and over the past three years virtually every remaining Shanghai pro-democracy or human rights activist has been sent to jail.

The city's cultural and material renaissance is taking place within strictly defined limits: while the spirit of Thirties Shanghai may be on the way back, there is little hope of it being any more democratic than its illustrious predecessor.

Swing city: Coco, a Chinese jazz singer performing in a Shanghai club (above). The bustling metropolis (left), which is attracting young Hong Kongers, is undergoing a cultural and material renaissance

Photographs: Magnum



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# The political challenge of another Irish outrage

Compare and contrast. In Amsterdam the leaders of countries locked for centuries in bitter strife – Catholics and Protestants, old enemies, ideological rivals – come together to talk, debate, win some, lose some. No one can say the recent history of European union has been especially edifying but at its core shines a big, bright and supremely attractive idea: peace. History is not all-determining.

At the same time, on Europe's periphery, atavistic nationalism claims two more victims. In Lurgan two community policemen were killed, murdered by an organisation which seems to have no idea of or interest in that wider Europe where states and sovereignties are in flux, where national borders are – for most practical purposes – disappearing. In that wider view, history long ago passed by the IRA and its political party Sinn Féin. No conceivable 21st-century future for Ulster or for the Republic of Ireland or indeed – notionally – for an island of Ireland as a single political entity contains their methods, their ideas or their bloody allegiances.

But none of that means the IRA is going to fade away, at least in the short to medium run; nor does it mean that Sinn Féin's support is going suddenly to evaporate on the dreary Catholic estates of Belfast or Londonderry. So after the shootings in Lurgan the ques-

tion becomes: is there a case for talking to the terrorist nationalists and their political henchmen, even if there is every suspicion that "peace" (in that ironic sense detectable in Amsterdam) is something their very identity forbids. The answer from London (delivered by Tony Blair in Amsterdam) was no, at least for the time being. From Washington it was "probably not" and from Dublin (from prime minister-designate Ahern, who was scheduled to see Gerry Adams tomorrow) "maybe". We say that one way or another the talking has to go on. If stopped now, as a mark of respect for those murdered RUC officers, it has to be resumed. That is for one simple reason: fewer people are likely to be killed or harmed while the extremists are included, however marginally, in the conversation about Northern Ireland's future.

There is no point pretending that talking has achieved much so far. If the all-party talks which formally opened last June were a train, it would still be creeping along the departure platform, people still hanging out of the doors. And that is with Sinn Féin still kicking around on the concourse.

And now the marching season approaches. Mo Mowlam says sincerely that she will leave no stone unturned in seeking to persuade marchers and estate residents to compromise, negotiate, agree. But her interlocutors are not the people on the

ground. They remain deaf to her pleas. On the Garvagh Road they have already been persuaded by Sinn Féin to make the march a flashpoint. In the Orange lodges they are determined, once again, to demonstrate their historical enthrallment, regardless of cost. By early July the Blair government, which offered a real opportunity for Northern Ireland, could be reduced to administering a state of siege. There is little point in regretting lost opportunity – and yet... The appointment of Ms Mowlam, the new Prime Minister's fresh face, the British government's willingness to talk, so much might

have been accomplished. But such "what ifs" imply there was a desire on the part of the nationalist extremists to give up, even temporarily, the "armed struggle".

As things are turning out, the Blair government's peaceful intent served as a useful cover for Sinn Féin in the Northern Irish local and the Republic's general elections. The tactic worked, a ballot paper in one hand and a gun in the other. There is a crude sense in which the trigger pulled in Lurgan on Monday was pulled in some metaphorical sense by all those thousands of voters who elected Martin McGuinness

and Gerry Adams as MPs and, in the Irish election, Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin into the Dáil. At some point Republican voters have to take responsibility for the violence committed in response to their support.

The challenge facing Ms Mowlam, and Tony Blair behind her, is to fight the fires this summer and manage the inevitable security crises, while reserving some space, some energy, some hope for the resumption of politics. However hot, the season of marches and mayhem will eventually end. The question will again be: can there be a peace process without the participation of the extremist nationalists? The answer is no. But what is the minimum entry ticket, one that is politically acceptable in London let alone for the Unionists in Belfast? It is, and has to be, a cease-fire, accompanied by long-term professions of peaceful intent by Messrs McGuinness and Adams. It will not be acceptable to have that interspersed with bombing and shooting, and it must never become acceptable.

What kind of talks? Ms Mowlam must at least consider abandoning the 1996 effort, agenda-less after a year, and think about some alternative. One idea is to use the Dayton, Ohio proceedings which led to Bosnian peace as a model – to convene a group of "experts", get them to hammer out the basic accord then confront sectional chiefs with their work. But why should

the Unionists buy a Dayton accord when they scarcely accepted Mitchell let alone the North compromise on marching? On the Dayton analogy, at some point the conference chair has to twist arms, some of them hard. That would probably mean Tony Blair having to cajole the Unionists – an evil fate for a Labour prime minister with so much else to strive for and accomplish away from the dark Ulster mire.

## Shrinking lunch, expanding waist

Once, so government propaganda films reported, the workforce downed tools at 12.30pm to troop along to the canteen for meat, two veg and pudding – serenaded by *Workers' Playtime* on the radio. Nowadays, it's all go. Lunch is suspended. A survey out today says a third of working women never stop for a midday break. The average worker takes only 33 minutes for lunch and since they spend only £1.45 on their food, they are unlikely to be eating much more than a sandwich. These figures help explain why productivity increases each year. But it leaves a puzzle. If we are consuming less at lunch-time, how is it that waist sizes are still rising? Do we stuff ourselves silly at breakfast, or gorge in front of the telly all evening? It's a mystery.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Puritans in pursuit of fox-hunters

Sir: Thank you for publishing Polly Toynbee's sensible and well-reasoned article against the banning of fox-hunting ("Labour should go to earth on fox-hunting", 16 June).

As a fox-hunter I think I can say that Labour will be unpleasantly surprised by the amount of anger and resentment that this bill will arouse among a very large number of people, not all of them directly involved in hunting. The knock-on effect of a ban will be appalling and in any case it is an unwarranted intrusion into people's private lives, activities and opinions that smack of the worst sort of puritanism. I think it a very great pity that they have seen fit to address this issue now, as it detracts from the record of a government that so far in its short life has shown itself to be both willing and able to address really important matters.

I say that with the grudging admiration of one who didn't even vote for them, and here they are caving in to the first shove from a pressure group. It doesn't show them in a good light. They should think again.  
Mrs A. SPURRIER  
Luton Cheney, Dorset

Sir: To Polly Toynbee's excellent article on fox-hunting only two points need to be added:

1. There are rural communities for which hunting, as well as supplying an important source of revenue and employment (custom in hotels, pubs, B&B, the breeding and care of horses and hounds, jobs for hunt staff), also performs a valuable social function, providing free entertainment to huge numbers of foot followers as well as sport for the riders. Such communities would suffer both economically and socially from a ban and, no doubt, be left feeling alienated by the urban-dominated concerns of current MPs.

2. The death of the hunted fox may be violent but the disease, mange, lingering demise of those that survive to perish from natural causes is infinitely worse.  
FERNANDA PIRIE  
London SW8

Sir: Of the huge majority of MPs to vote in favour of a total ban on handguns I wonder how many will vote against a ban on fox-hunting with hounds. After all, if this type of hunting does stop, the almost certain result will be a huge increase in shotgun ownership in rural areas in order to control the fox population.

Sadly I think that there are those in Parliament who see the right of a fox to be hunted, but never be savaged, as somehow above all other issues. What the people who oppose the use of hounds do not understand is that the world of wildlife or nature is a much more violent world than that of human civilisation.

Wildlife is largely about animals ripping each other apart, and fox numbers have been kept down in that way – nature's way – long before the involvement of humans. Anyway, much more painful ways of killing these animals are used where hunting is already banned. One such method is hours of agonising entrapment followed by shooting.  
P F KEVAN  
London N3

Sir: Polly Toynbee has got it wrong about fox-hunting. Fishing is not the equivalent working class



bloodsport. It is the baiting of badgers, bulls or bears, and dog and cock-fighting, and they have been banned for years, probably because, unlike fox-hunting, they have not had influential friends to defend them.

Some intensive farming practices are indeed cruel, but what justification is that for savaging live foxes to death?

If a thing is wrong, it's wrong, and I hope Parliament ignores Ms Toynbee's red herring and proscribes this ugly relic whose surface glamour masks its vicious reality.  
JAMES SCOTT  
Millon Keynes

Sir: Polly Toynbee's amusing monologue uses far too many euphemisms. Make no mistake, ripping to pieces any animal is cruel, sadistic and tells a little too much about the society in which we live. There is an alternative to this barbaric so-called sport – drag-hunting. An alternative which allows "rural pleasure" without the distasteful murder of the fox. Surely a compromise the hunting lobby can stomach?  
PAUL BELL  
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire

Sir: When will those in opposition, and the media, stop comparing hunting with hounds to bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and dog-fighting.

These so-called "sports", in which the hapless victim had no possibility of escape, were nothing more than the animal equivalent of boxing: an equally unattractive "sport" which must eventually be banned by a caring, socialist state.  
NICHOLAS KESTER  
Marden, Kent

### Tribal peoples are just like us

Sir: Reading your piece about the Dayaks in Saturday's "Letter from the Editor" (14 June) was a bit like being cornered by a saloon bar philosopher. With its bluff-good-sensational tone (*Hell's Teeth*... "cultural practices" as I should apparently call them... political correctness carried far beyond satire) it neatly exemplified the unconscious prejudice that Stephen Cory (letter, 13 June) was criticising.

You say: "Where once ignorant Europeans thought tribal peoples little better than monkeys, some breast-beating campaigners are now close to an inverted error, thinking of surviving indigenous peoples as ecological angels, more virtuous than fallen, corrupt or 'civilised' peoples." In fact, both these apparently contradictory views are part of the same European tradition, which goes back at least as far as the late Middle Ages, when European explorers regularly reported encountering "gentle" people in an "earthly paradise" as well as "men living like beasts". The link between these two images of the "savage" is that they both see tribal peoples as versions of our (European) past – either a Golden Age from which we have lapsed, or a bestial state from which we have risen.

The most recent incarnation of this notion is the anthropological belief, first expressed by Edward B. Tylor in the 1880s, that the "savage state" in some measure represents an early condition of mankind, out of which the higher culture has gradually been developed or evolved. It is this evolutionary model which you seem unquestioningly to accept, with your references to archaeology and your assertion that "there is such a thing as progress. And it does involve giving up cannibalism." If "there is such a thing as progress" it doesn't seem to have prevented us outdoing our ancestors in brutality during the 20th century. Arguably the cruelest and most destructive regimes in history, Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, both emerged in "advanced" Europe during the past 80 years. Both of them, moreover, used evolutionary ideologies – one racial, the other historical – to justify the murder of millions of biological or social "undesirables".

Our tendency to see tribal peoples simply as anachronistic remnants of our own past (either idyllic or bestial) is unhealthy both for us and for them. It is infantile projection to say that we are behaving like "sadistic tribal killers" when we are brutal – all we are really doing is behaving like ourselves – or, conversely, to think that we are tapping into some timeless ancestral nature-wisdom when we join Greenpeace. Tribal peoples are not emblems of our lost innocence or our suppressed savagery; they are our contemporaries (and among the most peaceful and least destructive communities in the world). Like us, they are full, complex human beings, acting according to their experience and understanding of

the universe and capable of cruelty and generosity, stupidity and hatred, genius and heroism.  
JAMES WILSON  
Bristol

Sir: On the day (9 June) that you reported on allegations of cannibalism among the Dayaks, I changed to be reading Alfred Russel Wallace's *The Malay Archipelago* (1869). His experience in Borneo led him to a high opinion of the Dayaks – above the Malays in mental capacity and undoubtedly superior in moral character. He found them truthful, honest, temperate in food and drink, despite oppression by their Malay and Chinese neighbours.

He gives many examples of their harmonious relationship with their environment and their ingenuity in construction, particularly in their use of bamboo. In these opinions he appeared to have the support of Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak, and it seems a long way from the impression given by your reports.  
FRANK PENFOLD  
Burpham, West Sussex

Sir: I enjoyed Rosie Millard's piece on the Freud clan, whose talent for publicity is indeed remarkable (16 June). In this context it is interesting to note that Edward Bernays, the American inventor of public relations as a business discipline, was Sigmund's nephew. Professor JAMES LUNDSEY  
Edith Weston, Rutland

### Bra Wars blaze out anew

Sir: Time to launch a salvo into the Bra Wars ("Breast beating and tantrums in ad land", 12 June).

Despite the claims of Trevor Beattie, Sam Hurford and Murray Partridge with regard to the origin of the Wonderbra "Hello Boys" advertising campaign, one need look no further than Mel Brooks. His film *Blazing Saddles* (1974) contains a scene where Brooks, as the corrupt Governor William J. Le Petomane, is asked to sign a bill to "snatch 200,000 acres of Indian Territory".

He suddenly turns to his bikini-clad secretary, seated alongside him, peers deeply into her cavernous cleavage and says: "Hello, boys... Have a good night's rest?... I missed you." This leaves the claims of the aforementioned advertising creatives totally without support. Sorry, boys.  
RAYMOND CHRISTODOULOU  
London W2

### Freudian PR

Sir: I enjoyed Rosie Millard's piece on the Freud clan, whose talent for publicity is indeed remarkable (16 June). In this context it is interesting to note that Edward Bernays, the American inventor of public relations as a business discipline, was Sigmund's nephew. Professor JAMES LUNDSEY  
Edith Weston, Rutland

### Nuclear leaks

Sir: According to Open University figures, radio-isotopes of xenon and krypton entered the environment following the Three Mile Island nuclear accident (report, 3 June; letter, 13 June).

In fact there have been three severe accidents involving radiation release. To Chernobyl and Three Mile Island must be added the Windscale reactor fire in October 1957, which released iodine 131, krypton 85 and polonium 210 into the environment.  
GRANT HOLE  
Henford

### How to get bags on to the bus

Sir: The Government encourages us to leave our cars at home in favour of public transport. Among several related initiatives is the opening of new "park and ride" schemes for our town centres. Most of those passengers will be shoppers faced with the task of getting their purchases on and off the buses and into their cars.

In the 1950s sea transport of general goods was revolutionised by the invention of the container, a standard sized box which would fit into any vessel designed to carry it. Soon most general cargo vessels had been suitably adapted or built to carry containers and ports had been equipped to handle them expeditiously, and with minimum effort.

Shopping bags and trolleys come in every conceivable size and shape, most are awkward to handle and none is designed to be compatible with our public transport systems. If passengers could purchase from a limited range of standard-sized bags and trolleys, and buses and trains were designed specifically to accommodate them, for instance in special racks at platform or road level, travel with luggage on public transport could be transformed.  
R H J HARVEY  
Colchester

### Lottery cash for redundancies

Sir: Anthony Bevins and David Lister mistakenly claim that the Arts Council of England has made a "discreet change" in its guidance on the use of Lottery money ("Lottery funds Royal Opera pay-offs", 16 June).

The article states that we have adopted a "new interpretation" in order to fund redundancies caused by Lottery-related closures. This is not so. The Arts Council's published guidance clearly states that "redundancy costs created by closure" are allowable. This has always been the case. Indeed, some lottery funded projects have already received money as a contribution to redundancy costs.

Redundancies are always regrettable. However, in the case of the Royal Opera House, this option will be considerably more economical than the alternative of continuing to fund jobs which will not be required while the theatre is closed. In the long-term, of course, the Lottery is a major creator of employment. Nearly 18,000 jobs have been generated in its first 18 months.

GRAHAM DEVLIN  
Acting Secretary-General  
The Arts Council of England  
London SW1

### Messy grammar

Sir: Myself, I like the idea of a Tuzareg daintily wiping his/her feet with a toe-rag after treading grapes, but I fear Walter Roberts ("Grammarians weep! The bell tolls for 'whom'", 14 June) is way off beam as the true derivation is quite different and far smellier/more smelly.

Coarse rags made from tow-coloured flax or jute were commonly used a century or more ago to clear up the most revolting mess – in hospitals and prisons for example; hence the term "filthy little tow-rag" to describe someone of stomach-turning villainess.  
JOHN APPLETON  
Northampton

# Sexy, moral and packing a pistol



Sara Paretsky, the creator of the best-selling feminist detective VI (Victoria) Warshawski, describes how she came to create her feisty heroine

To grow up white in America in the 1950s was to enjoy education, housing, food, and safety in a measure not accessible to much of the rest of the world. I am well aware that I speak from a position of considerable privilege.

At the same time, I speak after years of struggle to find a voice. In that distant Eden we little girls knew we were destined to be mummies. We didn't worry about careers. Those of us planning a university education knew we were studying not for our own benefit, but to make us better wives and mothers (indeed, when Yale University first opened its doors to women in 1965, its president assured horrified alumni that Yale's sole aim was to prepare women to become better wives and mothers by giving them the best education America could provide).

When I was a child, while boys planned lives as firefighters or cowboys, we girls dreamed of our weddings. When Roxanne Farrell "had to get married" in our sophomore year of high school, to us the most lawdy part was that she bought her trousseau at Woodworth's. Good girls who waited until they graduated from high school or college bought fancy bridalwear at the Plaza in Kansas City.

The books we read supported the idea of marriage as our only real goal. That was certainly the important message in that most enduring children's book, *Little Women*. At the end of *Little Women*, Jo, who is rebellious and ambitious in the early part of the book, is married. The mother of two small sons, she is running a boy's boarding school in Aunt March's old home and renounces her adolescent dream of becoming a great writer. She says to Marmee and her sisters:

"The life I wanted then seems selfish, lonely, and cold to me now. I haven't given up the hope that I may write a good book yet, but I can wait..."

In Jo March, the rebellious female is tamed

and turned into a servant of the male - a reflection of Louisa May Alcott's own life, spent in an unhappy servitude to her father.

Crime fiction throughout much of this century supported the values of America's Golden Age. Good girls were chaste, bad girls were not. Chaste girls could not act effectively. Unchaste girls could, but were only able to commit evil deeds.

Notable 20th century heroines include Carmen Sternwood of *The Big Sleep*. The first time Carmen sees Philip Marlowe, in the hallway of her father's house, she engages in a little sexual byplay.

Marlowe tells us:

"[S]he turned her body slowly and lithely, without lifting her feet. Her hands dropped limp at her sides. She tilted herself towards me on her toes. She fell straight back into my arms. I had to catch her or let her crack her head on the resplendent floor. I caught her under her arms and she went rubber-legged on me instantly. I had to hold her close to hold her up. When her head was against my chest she screwed it around and giggled at me."

Don't try this manoeuvre at home without adult supervision - or a good chiropractor.

All through this century, indeed, throughout the millennium, imaginary women have been using their bodies to try to make good boys do bad things, but - as Marlowe was in *The Big Sleep* - the heroes have been too strong for them.

From my first reading of American hard-boiled novels in my early twenties I knew I wanted to create a female detective who turned the tables on these negative images of women. But I was still living then in the world of daydreams. I could imagine myself with a finished book in print, but I couldn't imagine myself actually writing it.

It wasn't until I was in my early thirties, working as a manager for CNA Insurance, that I actually sat down to turn the stories I told in my head

into what you see in print. When I started work on my first book, *Indemnity Only*, it was with the definite goal of creating a female detective who was a person, not an angel or a monster. But I wasn't thinking of what it means to be a woman hero in a positive way. I knew what I didn't want my detective to be, but not what she should be. As a result, I put her into the mainstream of the hard-boiled form - orphaned, with a Smith & Wesson, drinking whisky - instead of thinking about what special role a woman detective might play.

The one aspect of my detective I was thinking about consciously was her sexuality and the role of sex in my stories. Serial killers who torture women or children, rapists who prey on women and children, play an enormous - and enormously titillating - role in today's fiction. I vowed not to use sex to exploit my characters - or readers. I also wanted my hero, V.I., to be a sexual being and a moral person at the same time. Too often the unmarried career woman in the modern mystery has deprived sexual appetites and has to die. In other cases, she may not be deprived but her appetites take a lot of satisfaction.

V.I.'s emotional involvements do sometimes cloud her judgements. That is a fact of life for men and women both. V.I. does have lovers, but her sexuality does not prohibit her from making clear moral judgements and acting on them.

For women to find a voice, a voice telling them that they may have adventures, that action is a woman's appropriate sphere, has been the difficult task of the last several centuries. This barrage of imagery urging us to silence - indeed, suggesting that rape and dismemberment are appropriate responses to women who speak - is difficult to overcome.

In my own case, growing up under the

demands of angry parents who sought to keep me in isolation, to denigrate my abilities, to make me the nursery maid and housekeeper for their sons, the effort to find and sustain a voice has been exhausting.

For me the true heroes are those who speak, more than those who act, those who can speak above the silencing clamour. My own heroine, V.I. is a woman of action. But her primary role is to speak. She says those things which I - which many women - are not strong enough to say for ourselves. That is why she can grow older, unlike most fictional detectives - because her success depends not so much on what she does, but on her willingness to put into words things that most people would rather remain unspoken.

I am myself not heroic. I get the shakes when I find it hard to say "no" to people when they demand of me that which I don't wish to do. Too often I've been bullied out of supporting people or ideas that are important to me.

But my heroine has a voice. V.I. grew up in poverty and her adult finances are always precarious. She must overcome serious obstacles in her work. She possesses an amazing well of skills in dancing, horsemanship, fencing or diving to draw on. She speaks Italian because her mother was a poor immigrant, not because her wealthy family gave her private tutors and sent her to Europe for study. V.I. does drive a sporty red roadster, but she has trouble keeping up the payments, and she often comes home to a dirty apartment, to find an empty larder or rotting food.

In the years since my first book appeared, we have seen enormous changes in the mystery. Whereas it took me almost a year to find a publisher willing to take a chance on a woman detective in America's third largest city, we now have so many books with women heroes that I can't keep track of them all. Women now routinely



The mean streets of Chicago (top): in which feminist detective VI Warshawski played by Kathleen Turner (left) in the film of the same name finds a voice to revise the constricting roles given to female protagonists in popular fiction - such as Alex Forrest (Glenn Close) in 'Fatal Attraction' and Carmen Sternwood (Martha Vickers, with Humphrey Bogart) in 'The Big Sleep'

review books in places like *The New York Times*, and our books are routinely reviewed. In 1982 it was still rare for high-prestige publications to look at works by women.

At the same time, books and movies still all too often look at women only in the tired old ways: In the last 10 or 15 years, as women's voices have grown stronger, the punishment of active women has also increased - at least in fiction. As a nod to the times imaginary women may have careers, but career women are deranged, with perverse sexual appetites, as Alex Forrest was in *Fatal Attraction*, or Carolyn Fothergill in *Presumed Innocent*. They may have to be brutalised or have to be rescued by the hero from rape.

When I was a teenager, *The Feminine Mystique* was a national bestseller. Today, hordes of young American women are buying a book called *The Rules*, which tells them how to return to the constricting society of my own childhood.

It makes me fretful, anxious to be standing close to my own half-century mark and see that my granddaughter is growing up in a world that still does not grant full humanity to women. I think of the great difficulty with which I came to a writing voice, the difficulty with which I maintain that voice, and wonder when it will become routine for a little girl to grow up with the sense that her "destiny" lies in words.

Twenty-six hundred years ago, the poet Sappho - who saw the goddess descend from the heavens in a chariot drawn by sparrows - wrote:

Although they are  
Only breath, words  
Which I command  
Are immortal.

My words do not come from me with the ease of breath: they are rather like water squeezed hardly from a rock. The sparrows outside my window don't bring me goddesses in chariots (although I keep hoping). They are hard-scrabbling urban birds, trying to stay alive in a world that's rough on small creatures, and on poets.

A few years ago a group of women came to a public event I did in Chicago. They introduced themselves to me afterwards as wives of out-of-work steelworkers. With the death of the mills on Chicago's south side, some of their husbands had been unemployed for five years or more; these women worked two jobs, as waitresses or check-out clerks, to keep food on the table and a roof overhead. They told me they had not read a book since leaving high school until someone told them V.I. came from their neighbourhood. They came to my lecture to tell me that the blue-collar girl detective helped them get through this very difficult hand that life had dealt them.

So although my words are only water squeezed from a rock, I hope that they may bridge a gap, help us all return to that time when girl poets as well as boys can grow up with the knowledge that their destiny lies in words.

The writer is a visiting fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford University. The above is an excerpt from a recent lecture.

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## The bald truth about William Hague

**Miles Kington**

A young, balding man who was still thought of as young. There have been good guys who have had not a hair on their head, such as Yul Brynner and Telly Savalas, and thousands of monks in Buddhist countries, but they never looked bald - they just looked clean-shaven. My favourite bald guy was always the black blues singer Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, who suggested teasingly in his songs that his baldness was the secret of his success with women. But what men needed, especially men who were getting thin on top, was a young, balding role model.

There was John Cleese, who started going bald and then acquired a thatch patch. Well, fine for people who had the time and money. There was Bobby Charlton and Robert Robinson, who carefully combed what was left across their bare pate. Well, fine for people who didn't mind looking ridiculous. But these were men who tried to stem the tide, and we all know that there is no point trying to stem the tide. In the great Quentin Crisp's wise words, don't try to go against the

flow - go faster than the flow. If you are going bald, he once said, cut all your hair off.

Which brings us to William Hague.

Once upon a time, William Hague stood up at the Tory party conference looking like a little boy and delivered a speech so mature it might have been dreamt up by a 20-year-old Tory.

He became famous for looking like a choirboy and sounding like a young man. Now he is standing up, looking like an elder statesman and still sounding like a young man.

I would not go so far as to say that he has given baldness a sense of style, but he has certainly told people that it is all right to be under 40 and balding. He has seen off older people with flowing locks, like Michael Howard and Peter Lilley. He has sent out the message: "OK, baldies of the world unite - you don't have to feel old any more!"

It's not great as a party slogan and a rallying cry. But it's a lot better than the Tories had any right to expect so soon.

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## While the Tories bicker, politics is changing shape

The Conservative Party is not itself. After last night's agonisingly close vote, it is broken in two; there is something profoundly symbolic and, for traditional Tories, equally ominous in the simple revelation that this party, once so adept at falling behind a new leader, is absolutely at a loss about which way to jump.

Whether Hague wins and leads the party further on its ideological kick, or whether it has a rush of reason to the head and plumps for Clarke, it is hard to see how either man can hold this thing together. Look closely at the faces after last night's vote and you see people who are still in deep, delicious denial. There is something fundamentally uncertain about politicians who clearly think that these are still days for score-settling and ideology, not for rethinking and humility. I watch them and think they are a little nuts - high - several front-benchers short of an Opposition.

Tony Blair, meanwhile, must wonder if his luck will ever end. Just as the sky darkens a little over his new administration - murders in Ulster, hard choices coming on public spending - he is offered the political equivalent of another few score on his Commons majority.

That is what the leadership fight seems to mean. Whether some moderate Tory MPs defect, or merely sit as a coherent, self-organised parliamentary splinter group, the prospect of a united main opposition party looks increasingly remote. At bottom, the anti-Clarke camps seem bizarrely complacent. They think the party is something that can be reformed on anti-EMU, even anti-EU, lines, then Mandelsonised, and can wait for the pendulum to swing. There will be a jolly few years of money-making and social life; the electorate will see sense; then it will be jobs for the chaps again.

And, of course, there is a respectable case for thinking that Blair and Co may foul things up and that one landslide may be followed by another. In politics, the only safe prediction is that the pundits will be confounded. (It is our constitutional function.)

But this thinking badly underestimates the scale of the Blairite project. Its ambition is to remake British politics, so that the broad, consensual middle-ground - pro-European but not federalist, pro-business but with a social conscience - is so firmly embedded in a grand political alliance as to be unmovable.

That is the ambition. There would be no government-shifting swing between left and right; merely a continuing "inclusive" administration that stuck close to popular priorities at all times. Blairite reformers had assumed that this would require proportional representation; maybe it doesn't. Maybe moderate Tories and Liberal Democrats are available already as cadet branches of the all-conquering new order.

Leave aside the inevitable hard choices, mistakes and enemies that any government makes. Is this not an impossible dream, simply because of the way modern societies work? Whether or not "left" and "right" are useful labels, all developed democracies have tended to evolve a system of binary politics, with periodic choices between conservatives and progressives.

As WS Gilbert put it, "I often think it's comical / How Nature always does contrive / That every boy and every girl, / That's born



Andrew Marr

The scale of the Blair project is larger and presents a far more profound challenge than a complacent Opposition realises

into the world alive. / Is either a little Liberal, / Or else a little Conservative."

Gilbert was making what would be nowadays called a "pluralist" point, satirising the assumption, not applauding it. But it does seem that healthy societies require a constant tension between reformers, or changers, and conservatives, who tug the reins - and so far, that has been played out through party politics. And the question the Blair project raises is this: can a "third way" administration, deftly mixing reform and conservatism, offer society both impulses? If the answer is yes, then the Tories could find themselves irrelevant for very many years to come. In the past, though, the answer has always been no.

Sometimes "third ways" have been covers for authoritarianism, as in the fascist "third way" of the Thirties, or the strong-arm socialism of Tito's Yugoslavia; or they have seemed Utopian ("the third way" is a common environmentalist slogan); or they have been crushed between opposing social forces - as the SDP was, in the conflict between Thatcherism and socialism. Like it or not, we have been living in a binary world.

There is another way of looking at British society today, though. Perhaps the "progressive" or reformist instinct does not derive from politics at all, but from science and business. The key challenges to the old order, whether in the politics of fertility, or censorship-destroying and capital-shifting information technology, or in the shifts of wealth and employment caused by globalisation, are not coming from Westminster or from political radicals of any kind.

If that is so, then perhaps the role of politics will become essentially defensive and reactive - responding to the moral challenges in embryology, equipping citizens with flexible skills for the fast-changing economy; defending challenged public services; conserving as much of the remaining countryside and habitat as possible. Government becomes not a force to drive social change forward - there is plenty of that - but a conservative, moderating response to the changes roaring through our lives.

We have hardly begun to find new language to describe the Blair project. But that seems to me not a million miles away from what the Government is up to. If this analysis holds good then there is no particular reason to expect Labour in power to behave in a way that will set the pendulum swinging back: it will try to have an essentially reassuring, small-c conservative effect on us. Isn't that the message coming from most of Whitehall?

And though I may seem to have strayed a long way from the complacent student politics of much of the Conservative leadership contest, this is really what the Tories should be discussing. It is a much more profound and long-term political challenge to them than they seem to realise. The Government is quietly and determinedly redrawing the map of British politics. One of its intentions is to destroy the Conservative Party as a serious political force. Suddenly, that doesn't seem entirely impossible, though Labour will require further assistance from Tory MPs themselves. They were shattered on election night. Remarkably they are in an even worse position this morning.

## The big cowboy will be watching you

by Hamish McRae

What have cigarettes in America, falling schools in Britain and BMWs got in common? The answer is that in all of them the link between the producer and the consumer is changing from a simple sale towards a longer-term contractual relationship.

Cigarettes first: it looks as though an historic agreement will be reached between the tobacco companies and the US authorities which will give the companies a large element of immunity from being sued for damages by people whose health has been impaired by smoking, in return for a series of payments by the companies towards the health-care of such people. Fierce haggling has been going on over the details, but it is possible that by tomorrow an agreement will be passed to the White House for approval.

The idea is a sensible one. Instead of the companies paying out an uncertain amount of money which would be distributed in a random way by the courts, it will give a known figure which could then be allocated in an orderly manner.

The American media is presenting it as "tobacco giants to pay out billions", and in literal terms that is indeed what will happen. But this idea that the tobacco companies will be punished for their wickedness is naive. The money will not come out of thin air. In the short term there will be some loss to shareholders, but in the longer term the money will be paid by the people who continue to buy the cigarettes. So what is really happening is this: the present and future flow of smokers will pay more for their cigarettes to compensate (or at least help pay) for the health-care costs of people who smoked 20, 30 or more years ago. It is a transfer of funds between different generations of smokers.

This inevitably brings the tobacco companies into a different relationship with their customers. There is an implicit bargain: pay more for cigarettes now and there will be funds to help look after you if you become ill later - though the funds will have to come from the next generation of smokers then, for like state pensions this is a pay-as-you-go plan, not a funded one.

This bargain has further implications. The tobacco companies now have an interest in the health and general lifestyles of their customers. If their customers smoke only moderately, go to the gym every day, eat up their greens and generally lead blame-free lives, they will presumably be healthier in old age and therefore be less of a charge on the health-care authorities. As the marketing gurus would put it, the tobacco companies are not just selling a product; they are entering into a relationship with their customers.



Marlboro Man: the tobacco companies are near a deal on the harm cigarettes cause

If a seller is taking on new obligations, it will want to be sure that a purchaser is living up to his or her obligations too

Now think about schools. Until recently you went to school, passed or failed your exams and that was the end of it. Not any more. As my colleague Jack O'Sullivan reported last month, more and more parents (and former pupils) are suing their schools for the alleged shortcomings in the education they received. A ruling in 1995 in the House of Lords cleared the way for people to take schools to court and there is a rash of cases coming up. Whether this will become a substantial trend will depend on the way the courts are seen to treat such cases, and it may be tough to prove that the reason someone failed his or her exams was the result of poor teaching rather than not doing the homework.

But you see the point: schools have to assume that they are not simply providing a service which begins and ends with the time the pupil is at the school. They too are entering into a relationship, for if former pupils fail in later life, they may end up taking part of the blame.

Indeed places of learning may find themselves involved even when the would-be student does not enter the portals. I was told yesterday by the head of an Oxford college that it had been threatened with legal action because it had failed to offer someone a place. In this case the person thought that the attempt to "buy" the service was enough to start a relationship, even though no transaction took place.

This idea that a sale is not a simple one-off thing is now being used as a marketing tool

by manufacturers. Perhaps the best example is BMW. The company boasts that a high percentage of its cars can be recycled: that at the end of their long lives they can be brought back, taken to pieces, the various metals and plastics sorted, and then used as raw materials for another car. Also, perhaps more than any other manufacturer, BMW has thought about ways the car might "tell" the manufacturer about its needs. The cars already "tell" the driver - via coloured warning lights - when they need to be serviced.

The next obvious stage would be to pass this information directly via a radio signal to the dealer who could then book the car in for the work to be done.

Many manufacturers are eager to do this, and it has great commercial attractions. For a start the manufacturer gets to know a lot more about the way the customer uses the product. It also cements the long-term relationship, making it more likely that the customer will come back for a replacement model.

As technology advances, the machine will be able to contact the maker even without the owner needing to know. A microchip in a washing machine could tell when it needed more water-softener and get it delivered. Or, take this example told to me by an acquaintance in Japan about his elderly mother's high-technology loo. This now analyses her urine and sends that results back to her doctor over the telephone; if there is any abnormality her medication can be adjusted appropriately, without her needing to travel to the clinic.

In all these cases - the cigarette, the education, the BMW - the key point is that the purchase is not a one-off affair, but the start of a relationship. But relationships go both ways. If the seller is taking on an obligation which goes beyond the actual sale, it will want to be sure that the purchaser is living up to his or her obligations too.

The tobacco company will, in theory at least, want to be sure that someone who claims that an illness was caused by smoking was not, say, a drug abuser too. The school will be able to require of its pupils proper attendance and attentive behaviour, for otherwise it will be released of its obligation to make sure that they learn properly. The manufacturer will, again in theory at least, know so much about how its product has been used that when you take your BMW back with a broken automatic gearbox, it will absolve itself from blame because the box will have radiated back that it was always being jammed into reverse when the car was still moving forward.

Result: a world which heaps more obligations on producers of goods and services becomes a world which will also place more obligations on purchasers of those goods and services. That means a more earnest, bossy and legalistic world. Do we really want that? It is easy to see why it is happening, but it does not sound a bundle of fun.

## Close the roads and traffic disappears

If you found the roads slightly less congested yesterday, it may have been because it was National Car-Free Day. Organised by the Environmental Transport Association, it was the first national attempt to get people out of their cars and onto other modes of transport. There were notable local successes with, for example, all but seven of 350 workers at Newcastle-upon-Tyne government offices foregoing their cars, and many train companies offering cheap rail tickets.

While such initiatives offer temporary relief, the search is on for more permanent solutions. The Road Traffic Reduction Act, passed in the dying days of the last government, requires local authorities to draw up plans to reduce traffic in their areas. The need for action has been recognised by Labour, which has set up a review of transport policy to be published as a White Paper in the spring with a heavy emphasis on "integrated transport".

Massive road-building programmes have been ruled out as too expensive and environmentally unfriendly. But what about a much cheaper alternative, a massive road-closing programme? It seems so obvious. If you need traffic to be reduced, then the space available for it should be cut



Christian Wolmar

What about a massive road-closing programme? It seems so obvious. If you need traffic to be reduced, then the space available for it should be cut

that if you remove road space, some of the traffic just disappears. The first study into this phenomenon, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, is due to be completed in the autumn.

Three years ago, an obscure government committee called SACTRA made the front pages with the discovery that building new roads, rather than providing an alternative route for existing motorists, generates extra traffic. People who used to go by bus or train changed to cars. Others, who might have stayed at home, took to the roads because it was easier than before. Result: more traffic and more congestion.

This might have seemed an utterly banal discovery. After all, when the first sheep trail was transformed into a rough road, all the local Neanderthals must have flocked to it. However, the notion of this generated traffic was news to the Department of Transport. For reasons lost in the mists of time, the DoT's way of calculating the value of new roads was based on the belief they did not attract extra traffic. Once it was accepted that they did - and that therefore they might not be worth building - the DoT had to recalculate its cost-benefit analysis.

So what about the obvious corollary that if you take road space away, then traffic on adjoining roads will not necessarily increase commensurately? Examples abound. It is the only enlightened policy



The dawning of a pedestrian-only Hammersmith Bridge

that was ever stimulated by the IRA. After a series of bombs and bomb scares in London, in 1993 the City Corporation threw up a ring of steel (well, plastic bollards actually) around much of the Square Mile to prevent through-traffic using the area.

Researchers reckon that since then, traffic in the restricted area has fallen by 40 per cent and air pollution by 15 per cent. They have come up with the bizarre statistic that daily "a line of traffic from Harrods to Cardiff has been taken out of the City".

More recently, closure of the crumbling Hammersmith Bridge has not resulted in the gridlock in west London that had been predicted. Sally Carr, a researcher, said: "Five per

cent of work journeys and 20 per cent of non-work trips are no longer made. Others have shifted to different modes, which means that a total of 29 per cent of the car journeys that used to go over the bridge are no longer taking place." The bridge is still open to walkers and cyclists, encouraging many former motorists to switch to these methods of travel.

Barnes, on the south side of the bridge, has become a village again, and residents, while annoyed that they can no longer go north very easily, are happy with the closure.

There are other examples around the capital and in other cities, both in Britain and abroad. When space for pedestrians was extended at Buckingham Palace, there was extra

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## business &amp; city

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## Storm over Thames Water dividend

Warning of hosepipe bans as payout is increased by 22%

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

The row over big dividend increases from the privatised water companies escalated yesterday after Thames Water announced a 22 per cent hike in its payout to shareholders at the same time as the company, which has the highest leakage rates in the industry, unexpectedly warned of possible hosepipe bans.

But Thames softened its opposition to the windfall tax, arguing that it could afford to pay a levy of £150m without having to cut back on investment. It was the first time a privatised utility had publicly named an "acceptable" figure for its windfall tax liability.

Thames was last night embroiled in another conflict with Ian Byatt, the water industry regulator. In his annual report, published yesterday, Mr Byatt again said he was concerned at unsustainable dividends. He said companies "should fulfil their investment programmes and that unjustifiably high dividend increases do not undermine that."

Bill Alexander, Thames managing director, said Mr Byatt had no responsibility to limit dividend payouts, despite his recent criticism. "The regulator can have a view on dividends but he's not required to regulate it. It's not within his remit. It would be crazy to have dividend controls on top. How profits are paid out certainly isn't part of the regulatory regime at all."

This is the second confrontation between Thames and Ofwat this year. The group was the only water company to refuse to voluntarily limit bill increases from April after falling

to meet investment obligations. While Thames, North West, Northern Ireland, Severn Trent, South West, Southern, Yorkshire and Wales all complied with the requirement.

The 22 per cent dividend hike to 54p a share, was the highest in this year's water company reporting season, taking the total shareholder payout to £1.52bn. The company reported a 22 per cent rise in profits before exceptional charges to £1.2bn. While international business made profits of £2.8m, compared with losses of £38m the previous year. Thames shares rose 6.5p, to 677.5p.

The company defended the dividend increase, arguing that a quarter was funded by international earnings, while the payout from the main regulated domestic business fell by 8 per cent. About half the dividend hike reflected the fact that Thames had bought back £225m worth of its shares last year.

Thames was also forced to defend its leakage record as it warned it could have to impose its first hosepipe and sprinkler bans for 66 years, starting from next month. In April the company had stated it did not expect to impose water restrictions, but Mr Alexander said the policy may have to change because of "exceptionally" low rainfall. Reservoirs were 87 per cent full, but only by taking water from the river Thames. "If we don't get substantial rain in the next month we'll have to ask people not to use sprinklers and hosepipes. The problem is we need rain," he said. Ironically the warning came during the wettest June in the capital for several years. Leakage rates had fallen



Facing critics: Sir Robert Clarke, Thames Water's chairman, can expect further confrontation with Ofwat as dividends soar Photograph: Brendan Carr

from a peak of 38 per cent in 1995-96 to about 28 per cent after the company began a £200m repair programme with 800 staff. Another measure is to move 100,000 households with high water demand onto meters each year.

However, Thames again refused to adopt mandatory leakage targets. Some other companies have already adopted such targets after the government signalled its intention to make them compulsory in its recent "water summit." Mr Alexander said his company's voluntary target of 20 per cent leakage was "unprecedented"

for any capital city. "We have extremely dry summers. Our pipes are in the same dry cracks that houses and it also cracks our

pipes... Why should I agree to mandatory targets? What happens if I agree to mandatory targets and I fail?"

Customer groups attacked the leakage rates, but said hosepipe bans were preferable to tougher restrictions on supply made later. Andrew Milne from the Ofwat Thames region customer committee said: "Thames Water must reduce its leakage rates."

The company's comments on the windfall tax will surprise other utilities. In a letter to the Treasury, published yesterday, it said it accepted the government's electoral mandate and was ready to pay a "fair share of the tax." David Luffman, finance director, said this meant spreading the bill over a wide number of utilities, including

Company	Leakage 1995-96 (million litres per day)	% Leakage target 1997-98 (million litres per day)
Anglian	296	20.1
Welsh Water	413	37.9
North West	789	33.5
Northumbria	190	23.6
Severn Trent	632	28.7
South West	142	26.1
Southern	120	18.7
Thames	1109	38.6
Wessex	133	30.6
Yorkshire	485	33.4

## British Gas faces price curbs

Michael Harrison and Chris Godsmark

British Gas is today bracing itself for a tough price clampdown as the Government publishes the long-awaited Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the charges its pipeline division Transco is allowed to levy.

Unions were last night called to a meeting at BG's headquarters to be briefed on the outcome of the MMC investigation, which was prompted after the company rejected price cuts worth £28 a year for domestic customers proposed by the industry regulator Clare Spottiswoode.

BG has warned that the reduction in revenues set out under the new price formula could mean 10,000 job losses from Transco's 20,000 strong workforce and cut its cash flow by £400m a year.

Details of the MMC's findings have been kept under tight wraps since its report was delivered to BG and Ofgas a fortnight ago. But the MMC is thought to have broadly backed the regulator's approach in a move which City analysts believe could still result in a reduction in bills of close to £20.

BG described Ms Spottiswoode's original proposals as the "biggest smash and grab raid" in corporate history and "seizure of shareholders' funds on an unprecedented scale". The company has been in dispute with Ofgas over the value of the assets on which it can earn a return, the amount of depreciation it can charge and the amount of operating expenditure it should be allowed.

Separately yesterday it emerged that the next trial of domestic gas competition, involving 2 million homes in Scotland and the North East of England, is likely to be pushed back from October to mid-November. Ms Spottiswoode will meet independent gas suppliers in the Ofgas Domestic Competition Focus Group on Monday to tell them Transco cannot build new computer systems in time to meet the original timetable.

Ian Lang, the former President of the Board of Trade, had announced the October plan shortly before the election, moving the original target date forward from 1998. John Battle, the new industry minister, has told Ofgas he wants to stick to the October timetable but is prepared to accept a short delay to avoid damaging customer service. The regulator has apparently accepted Transco's argument, given the short time remaining for industry-wide consultation.

## '£1.8bn liability' means Tube could not be sold

Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

London Underground is a "£1.8bn liability" that can not be sold as a single entity, according to senior government officials, despite announcing record "operating" profits this year.

Although Tube managers will announce on Thursday that gross operating margins for this year will exceed £210m—an improvement of more than £18m over the previous year—civil servants say this is a "sleight of hand" which disguises the system's true losses.

Officials point out that the capital spending every year costs at least £330m to replace equipment as it wears out—leaving the Tube heavily reliant on government grants. The system is also badly in need of investment and faces a bill for a backlog of repairs that tops £1.25bn. Although selling a majority stake in the Tube to the private sector remains an option for the Government, officials doubt whether there would be any takers for the ailing service unless subsidies were dramatically increased.

The most likely option for the Underground remains a British Rail-style split-up and sale. This would be vigorously opposed by Labour traditionalists who point out that present ministers

attacked similar Conservative proposals for the nation's rail network when they sat on the Opposition benches. Privately many officials concede that this would be a costly exercise. They point out that there is little room to increase revenue without raising the price of tickets, as London Transport already carries 85 per cent of commuters into London. This ability to increase sales quickly was key to the private sector tendering for BR's train operating companies.

"For the private sector to make a decent return and run the system you would need to pay companies at least £175m a year for 15 years to make money," said one civil servant. Little is expected to happen before 1999. This leaves the Underground facing a financial disaster, unless Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, injects more cash into the Tube. July it will be forced to prune its spending on essential station and signalling work.

If the Chancellor sticks by the Tory's spending plans for the Tube, the system will see its funding cut from more than £600m this year to £150m in 1999-2000.

Peter Ford, chairman of London Transport, said the system should not be privatised until ministers were sure it will get a better deal than in the public sector.

## Government borrowing figure shrinks

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

Government borrowing is shrinking, according to figures published yesterday. News of the favourable trend comes ahead of tomorrow's report from the National Audit Office, which is likely to claim that the outlook for the public finances published in last November's Budget was too optimistic.

The report is expected to prepare the ground for additional tax rises in the Budget on 2 July. Fears that companies will have to shoulder the higher tax burden because of Labour's manifesto pledges on income tax

helped push share prices lower again yesterday.

The FTSE 100 index ended nearly 63 points lower at 4,682.2, its second successive fall. An opening decline in shares on Wall Street following buoyant figures for US industrial output also contributed, although the Dow Jones index later climbed above 7,800.

The Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) was higher than expected at just under £4bn in May, but its total in the first two months of this financial year was only £4bn compared to £6.2bn at the same stage last year.

"The public finances are improving rapidly. The only rea-

son for casting doubt on this is to create room for manoeuvre on government spending," said Kevin Gardiner, UK economist at investment bank Morgan Stanley.

Yesterday's figures showed that tax revenues are 4.5 per cent higher than at the same stage of the previous year, with VAT and income tax especially buoyant. More importantly, departmental spending is 3 per cent lower than in the first two months of 1996/97. Even adjusting for items like the sale of the MoD married quarters, underlying expenditure is flat.

With all the signs that it will be increasingly hard to stick to

the current spending plans, most economists are assuming the NAO report will be a prelude to modest tax increases on top of the windfall levy in next month's Budget.

The report could find a hole of several billion pounds in the plans inherited from Kenneth Clarke. It is expected to challenge the assumptions made last Budget about the economy's potential growth rate, forecast falls in unemployment and the possible savings from cracking down on tax and benefit fraud.

Yesterday's fall in share prices partly reflected fears the Chancellor will raise up to £5bn a year from reducing or abolishing the

tax credit on dividends for tax-exempt institutions.

It was also a reaction to yesterday's move on Wall Street, where the Dow Jones index was more than 51 points lower at 7,718.71 shortly after opening. The impact of figures showing a bigger-than-expected jump in industrial output in May outweighed others showing tame consumer prices.

Manufacturing production jumped 0.4 per cent during the month. It was the tenth consecutive monthly increase after April's figure was revised up. Meanwhile headline inflation declined to 2.2 per cent from 2.5 per cent in April.

## BAT close to settling lawsuits

Sameena Ahmad

BAT and fellow cigarette companies in the US last night looked close to reaching a landmark settlement to resolve hundreds of lawsuits, which together could be worth \$300bn. Filed by smokers and state governments seeking to recoup healthcare costs. According to reports in the Washington Post, sources close to the talks have revealed that most of the major issues have been resolved and an agreement could be announced this week. Christine Gregoire, Washington's attorney general said yesterday: "This comprehensive plan is coming together, I remain cautiously optimistic that we'll get it done." Henry Waxman, a US

Republican opposed to the tobacco industry and in contact with White House chiefs, said yesterday that a breakthrough in the talks looked imminent. Reports say that in preparation for the announcement, negotiators have launched a campaign to woo public health groups, lawyers, the White House and the news media.

A BAT spokesman in London said he was not aware of any development in settlement talks while a representative of BAT's US tobacco arm Brown & Williamson refused to comment on the negotiations. Roy Burry of US broker Oppenheimer said that any agreement would touch on virtually every aspect of the industry from how cigarettes are advertised and marketed to the level of nicotine used and the price of each pack. Wayne Gerry, tobacco analyst at Kleinwort Benson said that the timing of settlement was uncertain: "We are all sitting here waiting. When it is announced the full ramifications will take most people a week or so to digest. Hell, just look at the logistics."

Though there are many issues still unresolved, those close to the talks say that several matters have already been settled. Cigarette makers could be asked to pay \$10bn in cash upfront, with around 70 per cent going to individual states to pay for medical costs to treat sick smokers. The cigarette companies are then expected to make payments of \$10bn-\$15bn a

year in perpetuity. On top the US tobacco industry might have to pay \$1.5bn for a campaign aimed at dissuading smoking. In addition, individual lawsuits are expected to be permitted with the total awards to successful plaintiffs capped at perhaps \$4bn a year. Analysts point out that in 40 years of lawsuits, the industry has not paid a cent for a health-related claim.

Other issues which may have been settled include an agreement to ban smoking in public buildings except for bars, restaurants, casinos and prisons and there would be bans on tobacco advertising on billboards and on sponsorship of sporting events and a ban on cartoon characters such as Joe Camel.

## Mirror in talks with Midland newspaper group

Cathy Newman

Mirror Group announced yesterday that it is in talks with Midland Independent Newspapers, owner of the Birmingham Post, about a possible bid for the company.

The news came after months of speculation that the two companies were in discussions. Market observers said yesterday that Mirror and MIN had been in talks "on and off" for around eight months. Neither David Montgomery, chief executive of Mirror, nor Chris Oakley, chief executive of MIN, would comment last night. MIN's shares soared 30p to 179p yesterday, up from a 12-month low of 108p last summer.

Dealers said the announcement was sparked by renewed rumours in the market. However, it is thought the deal will not be finalised immediately, and talks are progressing at a "fairly leisurely" rate.

Mirror, which owns a 46 per cent stake in Newspaper Publishing, publishers of *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*, already co-operates with MIN on a cable television venture, Birmingham Live. Executives at both companies have previously said that these existing business links may have started rumours of a deal.

Analysts speculated that, judging by the prices offered for other regional newspaper groups, MIN may go for around

£180m. Some commentators also believed that if Mirror clinched the deal it would sell a number of titles in order to focus on MIN's Birmingham and Coventry strongholds. A range of groups, including Johnston Press and Midland News Association, may be interested in any titles offered.

One analyst said Mirror could expand further into the regional newspaper sector if it was successful in its bid for MIN. He said: "If Mirror gets it, I'd see it as a stepping stone to acquiring other regional newspaper groups." Mirror bid in conjunction with Independent Newspapers for Pearson's Westminster Press titles last year, but lost out to Newsquest Media Group.

MIN has been repeatedly named as a bid target as consolidation in the regional newspaper industry gathered pace.

AA

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Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	4745.10	-38.80	-0.8	4783.10	4056.60	3.46
FTSE 250	4657.10	-29.00	-0.6	4729.40	4462.00	3.59
FTSE 350	2236.10	-17.70	-0.8	2312.80	2017.90	3.49
FT Small Cap	2293.81	-4.70	-0.2	2374.20	2178.29	3.09
FT All Share	2249.67	-16.44	-0.7	2266.11	1989.79	3.46
New York	7772.09	-9.95	-0.1	7782.04	5092.94	1.84
Tokyo	20861.07	+152.72	+0.7	20861.07	17303.85	0.791
Hong Kong	14394.80	+282.05	+2.0	14980.90	12055.17	3.081
Frankfurt	3765.11	+20.87	+0.6	3765.11	2848.77	1.451

Statistics as at 17/6/97

Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond
1 month	1 month	1 month
3 months	3 months	3 months
6 months	6 months	6 months
1 year	1 year	1 year
2 years	2 years	2 years
3 years	3 years	3 years
4 years	4 years	4 years
5 years	5 years	5 years
10 years	10 years	10 years
15 years	15 years	15 years
20 years	20 years	20 years
25 years	25 years	25 years
30 years	30 years	30 years

£/\$	£/DM	£/¥
1 £/\$	1 £/DM	1 £/¥
2 £/\$	2 £/DM	2 £/¥
3 £/\$	3 £/DM	3 £/¥
4 £/\$	4 £/DM	4 £/¥
5 £/\$	5 £/DM	5 £/¥
6 £/\$	6 £/DM	6 £/¥
7 £/\$	7 £/DM	7 £/¥
8 £/\$	8 £/DM	8 £/¥
9 £/\$	9 £/DM	9 £/¥
10 £/\$	10 £/DM	10 £/¥

Index	Latest	1 yr Ago	5 yr Ago
RPI	156.4	+0.38p	150.9
Gold	341.95	+0.40	394.15
Gold	208.72	+0.06	249.93
Base Rates	6.50p	8.75	

هنا من الأصل



# Eurotherm chief is feeling the heat

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Electronic parts manufacturer Eurotherm grabbed the headlines last summer when the chief executive, Claes Hultman, resigned after a messy battle with fellow directors, only to be reinstated weeks later by admiring institutional investors. The debacle was followed by a boardroom bloodbath, with Mr Hultman's detractors, including founder and chairman Jack Leonard, being forced out.

But Mr Hultman is going to have to work hard to repay the institutions' faith in him. Since he regained control, Eurotherm's share price has fallen by a third to 376p, down 6.5p yesterday, and underperformed the stock market by 44 per cent. Its interim results did little to lift the gloom. Profits fell by over a fifth to £14.7m.

To be fair, Mr Hultman is not to blame. Underlying profits were flat but Eurotherm was drenched by the rise in the value of the pound, which wiped £4m off the bottom line. Strong sterling creates two problems for Eurotherm. First, it sells almost half of its UK products, including temperature control equipment, drives which regulate motor speeds and gauging equipment, to domestic-based exporters. But a rising pound has hit these customers hard and Eurotherm's domestic sales have been blighted. It has reacted by pioneering products which have, on the whole, been successful. But it is having to work hard to stand still.

Second, foreign producers are now much more cost competitive. Central European manufacturers especially have flooded Eurotherm's main markets with cheap imports. Poor demand on the Continent, induced by faltering economies in France and Germany, has added to its woes.

Pressure on margins is intense. Eurotherm's operating margin fell by more than two percentage points to 14 per cent. It would have dropped more but for the fact that it has decided not to slash prices to win custom, though this has had an adverse effect on sales which slipped nearly 3 per cent. Mr Hultman summed up the situation by saying: "We have a horrific situation with currencies."

One solution is to expand its businesses in North America and the Far East. But most sales over there are done through distributors and Eurotherm admits it does not stock enough products to win contracts with middlemen. To get them it will have to expand its product range by making more acquisitions. With £28m in the bank it can afford to do so, but penetrating these markets could prove to be a lengthy process.

Broker Henderson Crosthwaite has downgraded current year forecasts from £34m to £29.5m, putting the shares on a prospective p/e ratio of 17. Eurotherm could make an attractive bid

target but Mr Hultman denies he has received a telephone call from anyone. Eurotherm is also considering returning cash to shareholders or launching a share buy back. Even so, the shares are best avoided.

## Business Post delivers the goods

Business Post has been an unlikely success story since it floated at 130p nearly four years ago. The company is still a minnow in the fiercely competitive UK market for express delivered parcels and packets.

Its 3 per cent market share, built up using a unique franchise and regional hub system, puts it at number eight or nine, behind giants such as the Post Office's ParcelForce operation, Securicor and TNT. But the shares' 128 per cent outperformance since launch speaks for itself, even if they were down 5p at 478p on a bad day for the market yesterday.

Even though profits growth has steadily slowed over the past few years, a 24 per cent increase to £16.1m in the latest 12 months to March is still high-

ly respectable, given the increasing size of the group. Earnings per share expanded by 21 per cent to 21p.

The company is demonstrating its confidence in its own financial strength by using close to half its £9.8m cash pile to pay a special dividend of 9.1p a share. Together with the second interim of 6.9p, this will be paid on 1 July to beat any move by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to scrap or reduce advance corporation tax.

The group denies any pressure to pay from founding brothers Peter and Michael Kane, both of whom have relinquished executive duties at the group over the past 18 months, but the special payment means the called pair will scoop a £7m windfall from dividends this year.

Certainly, there seems little reason to doubt the management's claim that the group can pay the dividend and meet its capital expenditure requirements over the next few years. All of last year's tripled capital expenditure at £7.5m was easily covered by operating cash flow of £14.5m, which augurs well for the current year's budget of £8.3m.

The new regional hub in London's Docklands will allow Business Post to

attack the big but fragmented City of London market, while "super regional" hubs in Runcorn later this year and in north London by 1999 will complete its network. But the real boost should come from the £7.1m national hub due on-stream in Birmingham, which will cut costs and increase capacity by between 100 and 400 per cent.

Profits of £19.3m this year would put the shares on a forward p/e of 19, making them a firm hold.

## Carpetright sales bounce back

Lord Harris of Peckham was working hard yesterday to restore confidence in Carpetright, the carpet retail group which he chairs. He had his work cut out, having sold a quarter of his holding in the business at 569p just months before the shares slid to a 435.5p low on fears it was over-expanding in a sticky market.

But full-year figures and upbeat comments on current trading helped, pushing the shares 37.5p higher to 478.5p yesterday.

Encouraging was Lord Harris's insistence that, far from a trading battle, there was plenty of room in the carpet market for more stores. With more than 70 per cent of the UK carpet market still in the hands of the independents and only one other big competitor - Allied Carpets - Carpetright has scope to increase its market share from the current 17 per cent.

Sales for the year to April rose 10 per cent on a like-for-like basis in a market growing at around half that rate. Moreover, Lord Harris reckons that even if the group's like-for-like sales growth slowed to 4 per cent for the next three years, as it has over the past seven weeks, the group will still hit its target of 30 per cent market share by 2000 and maintain margins.

As it is, most of the recent slowdown has been due to a dip in consumer confidence before the election and there are signs of a recent bounce in sales growth, which should be maintained by the housing market recovery.

That could mean higher margins over the next few years. What will also help are signs that the group is abandoning its cut-throat discounting policy for more sensible pricing.

Gross margins in the period lifted a healthy 3.4 percentage points to 49 per cent.

NatWest is looking for profits of around £41m for the current year. On a forward p/e ratio of 14, the shares are cheap compared to the loftier valuation applied to Allied, but that is probably a fair valuation.

# Hazlewood to focus on own-brand foods

Magnus Grimond

Hazlewood Foods is moving onto the growth track with plans to beef up investment in expanding markets from sandwiches to year-round strawberries following the £45m sale of its potato processing activities announced yesterday.

The Fri O'or businesses in Holland and the Czech Republic are being sold to Danisco, a Danish food company, after Hazlewood decided they did not fit with plans to develop "value-added" sectors of the business. The shares added 5.5p to 116.5p.

John Simons, Hazlewood's chief executive, said the sale "largely completes what has been a five-year refocusing programme. Over that period, we have got out of a lot of businesses where we didn't have critical mass, like orange juice, confectionery and shellfish."

He said Hazlewood would "concentrate very much on growth markets, where the retailer's brand is a very strong player".

These markets he defined as convenience foods, delicatessen products such as quality meats and snack foods, and glasshouse horticulture. Hazlewood, which has no brands of its own, is already the biggest supplier of own-brand foods from sandwiches and recipe sauces to growing herbs for retailers such as Asda, Sainsbury, J. Sainsbury, Tesco and Sainsbury, which together account for half the group's turnover.

The sandwich market alone is growing at 12 per cent a year, while the group has just started supplying strawberries and raspberries grown all year round under glass to compete with fruit air-freighted in from abroad. Hazlewood is also developing a chilled food operation on the Continent based on the recent acquisition of a small Dutch manufacturer.

Some of the proceeds from yesterday's sale will be used for "quick ratchet payback" investments, such as increased automation to add features to products. In the short run, the

money will slash gearing, which was around 130 per cent five years ago, by nearly half, from 51 per cent at the year end in March to a pro forma figure of 27 per cent. The deal would lead to around a £3.5m dilution in operating profits, but that should be offset in the current year by the absence of the £4m hit last time from the BSE scare, Hazlewood said.

The news accompanied the announcement of pre-tax profits of £34m to £32.3m in the year to March, a rise of 8.8 per cent on a £4.7m charge for the sale of a recycled paper business was excluded. A final dividend of 4.5p raises the annual total by 3 per cent to 6.9p, payable from underlying earnings per share up 4.9 per cent to 11.9p.

Mr Simons said the group had bounced back from the BSE crisis in the second half, recording underlying volume growth of 7.4 per cent, to give 5.2 per cent for the year. Margins had grown for the third successive year.

# Watson & Philip puts problems behind it

Magnus Grimond

Watson & Philip, the Dundee-based convenience store operator, put October's profits warning behind it yesterday to report a 20 per cent jump in operating profits in the first six months of the year.

James Watson, chairman, said the multi-temperature "Distribution Plus" business which caused the problems was now developing well, with sales increasing by a half.

He said they were turning away lower margin business for the likes of schools and hospitals in favour of areas where "we can add value for our customers and make acceptable returns."

Major contract wins included a deal to supply the Rain Forest Cafes restaurant chain in the UK and Europe and La Belle Epoque, the Lon-

don restaurant billed as Europe's biggest.

"The enhancement of our ability to supply chilled and frozen food leaves us well positioned for expected new business opportunities as they arise. We will continue to focus on managing maximum efficiency gains," he said.

The news prompted a 4p rise in Watson's shares to 436.5p yesterday, but they remain well short of the 466p they were at before October's warning.

The group unveiled pre-tax profits raised from £6.78m to £7.15m in the 26 weeks to April, a 24 per cent rise when exceptional items are stripped out. The interim dividend goes up 7.5 per cent to 5.7p.

The figures included a £4.33m exceptional credit to cover expected income over the remaining three-year life of a now discontinued wholesaling con-

tract to supply the Spar/VG retailing group. The move came after it became clear that there was no chance of the group resuming the work again. The credit was partially offset by a £3.83m charge following a decision to exit vacant properties, mainly comprising surplus depots.

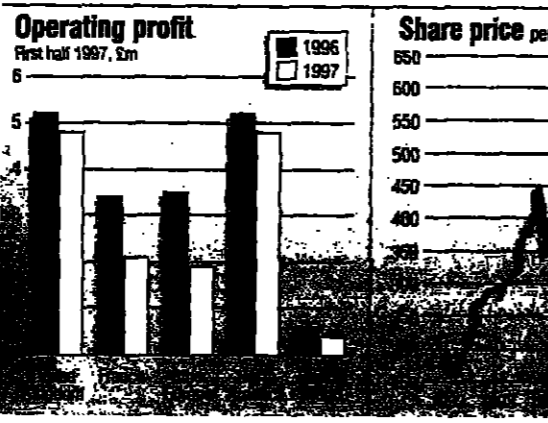
Food service operating profits rose 18 per cent to £1.3m, but the main driver remained the Aldays convenience store division. That saw a 28 per cent increase to £6.8m, including a 90 per cent jump in results for franchised operations to £2.34m.

These are run through Aldays' unique regional development company network, which involves head franchisees being given the right to operate up to 40 stores in a given region, with financial backing from the group, in exchange for putting up £100,000 of their own capital.

## Eurotherm: At a glance

Market value: £342m, share price 376p

Trading record	1994	1995	1996	1996	1997
		Full Year	Half Year	Half Year	Half Year
Revenue (£m)	168	195	207	102.2	99.5
Pre-tax profits (£m)	26.1	34.1	37.7	18.7	14.7
Earnings per share (p)	19.4	25.1	27.8	13.4	10.8
Dividends per share (p)	5.50	7.50	9.0	4.0	4.2



## Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Applied Telegraphics (F)	9.58m (8.08m)	238,639 (175,031)	0.81p (0.71p)	
Admiral Teleatics (F)	6.89m (119.51m)	2,83m (412,000)	7.35p (2.69p)	
Carroll Property (F)	1.05m (355.00m)	210,000 (118,000)	3.9p (3.0p)	1.0p (0.9p)
Carpetright (F)	233.9m (185.3m)	32.17m (25.22m)	28.5p (22.3p)	19p (14.5p)
Servotronics (F)	99.5m (102.2m)	14.7m (18.7m)	10.8p (13.4p)	4.2p (4.0p)
Firth Ribson (F)	74.92m (71.92m)	6.5m (5m)	3.4p (1.4p)	0.8p (0.4p)
Glenwood Cookhouses (F)	5.47m (-)	1.08m (-)	5.54p (-)	
Radwood Foods (F)	765.6m (768m)	37m (34m)	12.5p (13.54p)	6.9p (6.7p)
Hendricks Amey (F)	23.32m (28.38m)	1.96m (77,000)	5.0p (3.95p)	1.5p (1.3p)
Jennings Bros (F)	6.23m (6.66m)	455,000 (263,000)	4.5p (3.1p)	3.0p (2.5p)
Landmark Leisure (F)	2.4m (-)	32.8m (49.4m)	10.1p (15.45p)	4.0p (4.0p)
Montevale Estates (F)	20.47m (18.11m)	0.39m (7.89m)	122.9p (115.5p)	42p (37p)
Purvis & Sons (F)	151m (138.2m)	7.47m (16.35m)	41.9p (130.5p)	14.46p (12.87p)
Rebus Group (F)	66.44m (60.04m)	6.1m (6.5m)	4.84p (6.33p)	1.8p
Sherriff Holdings (F)	14.18m (12m)	321,000 (1,62m)	1.9p (10.1p)	2.35p (2.35p)
Thomas Water (F)	1.29m (1.19m)	271.8m (228.7m)	82.8p (50.7p)	34.4p
Thames Valley (F)	51m (47m)	4.5m (3.5m)	8.8p (8.5p)	2.2p (2.25p)
Watson & Philip (F)	297.2m (227.8m)	7.15m (6.77m)	11.3p (8.8p)	5.7p (5.3p)
Wellman (F)	128.5m (130.3m)	5.06m (10.17m)	2.4p (5.7p)	2.3p (5.2p)

# Portsmouth to widen publishing interests

Cathy Newman

Portsmouth & Sunderland, the publisher and retail group, is preparing to hit the acquisition trail now its period of heavy investment in printing facilities and shops is at an end.

The newspaper group said yesterday it was looking to expand in retailing and publishing, but warned it would not overpay for regional newspapers. Charles Brims, chief executive of Portsmouth & Sunderland, said: "We'd like to make acquisitions in publishing and retailing if the right opportunity

comes along at the right price."

He said he would identify opportunities to buy individual titles or entire publishing companies, but only in adjacent areas where cost-savings could be made. Over the past two years Portsmouth has spent £45m on printing presses and opening branches of its One Stop Community Shops.

Underlying profits before tax were up 3.3 per cent to £9.3m in the year to the end of March. The previous year's profits of £18.6m were flattened by the £9.9m gain from the sale of the Croydon Advertiser Group.

# 'We're not going to Manchester'

## PEOPLE & BUSINESS

Claes Hultman is never one to pull his punches, but the ebullient Swede, who runs Eurotherm and Wembley, is not going to win any friends in Manchester after comments he made yesterday. Mr Hultman, who is busy sorting out Wembley's problems, said the FA Cup Final was likely to remain at Wembley despite the site having to undergo a £120m overhaul after being chosen as the preferred location for the new National Stadium.

"People want to go to Wembley and watch the FA Cup," he said. "It is an option to renovate the ground in sections. We would like to keep Wembley open. After all, who would go to Manchester to watch the Cup Final?"

Mr Hultman is no stranger to controversy. Last year he was at the centre of a boardroom bust-up with fellow directors at Eurotherm, the electrical components supplier, where he is chief executive. He resigned then was reinstated after institutional shareholders kicked up a fuss.

This year he will take a pay cut after the group announced disappointing interim results. "With profits falling I will not get my bonus," he said.

Lord Harris of Peckham, the outspoken chairman of Carpetright and former treasurer of the Conservative Party, has declared his undying support for William Hague in the battle for the Tory leadership. The millionaire carpet king, who recently shelled out £50 after losing a bet with journalists on the outcome of the general election, said he was surprised by Mr Hague's stance on Europe: "Ken Clarke is in favour of a single currency. I don't think we'll be ready for that for a few years. The Conservatives also need something different. William is young, new and enthusiastic."

Lord Harris says he is not looking for



Controversial: Claes Hultman wants to keep the Cup Final at Wembley

another active position in the party and will no longer make regular donations to the Tories. However, he tells me he is on hand for a spot of fundraising. "If William wants me to invite friends for dinner, I'm always willing to help."

After accusations of nepotism on the appointment of his 28-year-old son, Martin, to the board, Lord Harris said none of his other children would sit at the high table. Carpetright also employs older son Peter Harris, who is in charge of purchasing. Martin is looking a reluctant star. Not only did he ask not to be on the board, but while Lord Harris says Martin is being groomed to take over when he retires, probably in ten years, Martin is playing coy: "The right man will get the job. Whether that's me or not remains to be seen."

The legal world is agog with the revelation that Stephen Cooke, deeply involved in merging Guinness and GrandMet, has found the time for a spot of moonlighting as a writer of film scores. The Slaughter & May partner's credits apparently include the music for the Channel 4 documentary *The Dying Rooms*. One of my colleagues, who spent his schooldays being overshadowed by this renaissance man, says the development is in keeping with the character of somebody who seems to defy his firm's ultra-dull image. Before leading a punk rock outfit, his party piece was adapting popular songs, such as Johnny Cash's *Thing Called Love* to local themes.

Viscount Montgomery of Alamein can stop spinning in his grave: the future of his famous duffel coat has been secured, or at least the company which made it is facing a more certain outlook. As Tibbert, the company doctor who saved the Wellingborough-based maker of The Montgomery Duffel from the hands of the receivers in 1980, is bowing out, but continuity at the 99-year-old company is being preserved through a management buy-out backed by Murray Johnstone, the Glasgow-based venture capital group.

No figure is being put on the deal but Richard Nelson, the new managing director, is a happy man. Talking as a party in the Northamptonshire factory raged in the background yesterday, he waxed: "Clothing companies are two a penny, but this is a rather special one. We are going forward." Certainly duffel coats are enjoying a revival in the UK at the moment but they appear to be even more popular overseas. The Japanese are apparently prepared to part with up to £600 for a genuine English model.

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**Stock Spotlight**

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## market report / shares

Data Bank	
FTSE 100	4682.2 -82.9
FTSE 250	4538.0 -19.1
FTSE 350	2268.7 -26.4
SEAQ VOLUME	854.3m shares
52,774 bargains	
Gilt Index	96.68 -0.26
Share spotlight	
Share price, pence	
100	100
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300	300
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## Turbulence expected as huge option expires on Friday

Taking Stock

## MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Suddenly equities are very nervous. With Gordon Brown's first Budget and its implied threat to institutional tax relief already taking its toll, the stock market was ill-prepared for an outbreak of futures and options nerves.

On Friday one of the biggest punts on the direction of shares - alleged to be around £1.5bn - is due to expire. The option has come dramatically unstuck: it banked on Footsie being at 4,300 points.

The contract was taken out in November. With Footsie romping ahead it has been getting seriously out of the money for nearly two months.

It would, therefore, be surprising if the investment house involved, rumoured to be a major institution, has not already taken evasive action.

Even so there are fears it could be forced into dumping some shares and there was talk yesterday of large lines on of-

fer. The position could be made worse by other recent options and futures activity.

Many speculators, banking on a sharp Footsie correction, rolled over short-term contracts. It could all add up to a vicious square and Friday's expiry could be one of the most turbulent sessions witnessed for a long while.

Budget and expiry fears, plus the continuing fall-out from National Westminster Bank, took Footsie down 82.9 points to 4,682.2. It has lost just over 100 points from Friday's record high - not a big fall but it has created worries that the market is in for a sweaty, uncertain summer, even if the Budget is not as fearsome as some expect.

Many strategists predicted a degree of Budget uncertainty would take the shine from Footsie. The general view that the index is heading for 5,000 remains unaltered.



Although Footsie's recent upsurge left the rest of the market floundering in its wake its sudden display of weakness has gripped supporting shares with the FTSE 250 index and the FTSE SmallCap index giving ground.

There was, however, no deluge of selling. Turnover remained around average with Norwich Union, down 6p at 318.5p, attracting a 40 million-plus volume.

NatWest slipped a further 9.5p to 745.5p and would have gone lower if some absurd story of a takeover bid had not been heard.

Even so, the accident-prone bank helped unsettle the rest

of the banking sector with Abbey National off 37p at 831p and Lloyds TSB 20p at 606.5p.

Grand Metropolitan and Guinness were the toast of Goldman Sachs, which suggested prices of 660p for the two merger hopefuls. LVMH, the French group which opposes the deal, bargained in by cheekily buying 4,750,000 GrandMet shares at an average price of 577p. It said it had no intention of bidding for GrandMet, up 15.5p to 581p.

Guinness rose 8.5p to 588.5p. Engineer Siebe, as its takeover of APV drew towards its close, gained 18.5p to 988.5p.

Midland Independent Newspapers, the Birmingham Post group, rose 30p to 179p as it disclosed it was in takeover talks with Mirror Group, off 3.5p to 205p.

BSkyB tumbled 21.5p to 566.5p as chief executive Sam Chisholm said he would leave at the end of the year. Some suggested the Chisholm factor was worth 100p a share.

EMI, the showbiz group, picked up 120,000 shares at 1.17p. It is returning nearly £500m to shareholders through the creation of "B" shares, worth 114.5p, which can be redeemed shortly after they are issued.

Carpetright rose 37.5p to 478.5p on its results, dragging MFI Furniture 7p better at 142p. British Vita, the chemical group, edged ahead a further 3.5p to 219p amid talk of a takeover of APV.

Bluebird Toys rose 10.5p to 90.5p on hopes of takeover action and Rags Software put on 1.25p to 4.5p after selling a loss-making offshoot and expressing hopes it will return to profits. Managing director Paul Finnegan purchased 560,000 shares at 3.5p.

Petra Diamonds firmed to 108.5p. It has acquired diamond concessions covering 10,000 square miles in north eastern Angola.

Bakyrchik, the gold hopeful, was suspended at 83.5p as it sought more cash.

Newcomers made sound debuts. Powderject Pharmaceuticals reached 197.5p from a 185p placing and Highland Timber, off a 120p launch, reached 127.5p.

On Ofex, Capolito Roma, a clothing and footwear retailer, rose 4p to 47p. The company has said it is in takeover talks. One rumour is Owen & Robinson, unchanged at 10.5p, will bid 55p a share.

Stories are circulating that William Grant & Sons, the unquoted Standfast Scotch whisky group, is stakeholding at Burn Stewart, a whisky group with a record of declining profits since it came to market six years ago. Some believe Grant, which held abortive merger talks with Burn Stewart, could have 2.9 per cent of the capital. Last night Burn Stewart hosted an investment dinner. Profits last year were hit by a dispute with its auditors; the problem has since been resolved and stockbroker Charles Stanley expects profits of £3m for the year ending this month. The shares closed at 63.5p.

Springwood, the leisure group, could make profits of £1.7m this year and £2.4m next, says stockbroker Teather & Greenwood. The shares rose 3p to 101.5p.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: 1 Six months; 2 Ex-dividend; 3 Ex all UK Unlisted Securities; 4 Suspended; 5 Penny Paid; 6 Nil Paid; 7 All Shares; 8 All Shares; 9 All Shares; 10 All Shares.

Source: FT Information

## The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0800 123 333, and when prompted to do so, enter the 4-digit code entered next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0800 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

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Foreign Exchange 04 Tokyo Market 21 High Street Banks 41

Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0800 123 333.

For assistance, call our helpline 071 676 6000 (9am - 5pm).

## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
Norwich Union	400,000	Guard Ind	300,000	CI	100,000	MTI	80,000
Sainsbury	200,000	Harley	150,000	Centra	100,000	ASDA Group	80,000
BT	200,000	NatWest Bank	150,000	Lloyds TSB	100,000	BP	70,000
BT	200,000	British Gas	150,000	British Gas	100,000	British Gas	70,000
Adelphi	200,000	Lucent	150,000	Lucent	100,000	Lucent	70,000

## FTSE 100 index hour by hour

Time	Index	Time	Index	Time	Index	Time	Index
Open 4783.3	up 12	11.00 4749.9	down 32	16.00 4674.5	down 70.5		
High 4822.2	up 32	12.00 4752.0	down 10.2	18.00 4678.4	down 63.7		
Low 4762.2	up 11	13.00 4674.5	down 47.7	Close 4682.2	down 62.8		

## Retailers, Food

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Telecommunications

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
BT	200,000	BT	200,000	BT	200,000	BT	200,000
BT	200,000	BT	200,000	BT	200,000	BT	200,000
BT	200,000	BT	200,000	BT	200,000	BT	200,000

## Textiles &amp; Apparel

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Retailers, General

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Support Services

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Water

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Rights Issues

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Recent Issues

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Government Securities

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Index-linked

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Shorts

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Longs

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

## Undated

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000
ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000	ASDA	200,000

\*ROYAL ASCOT:  
**Sheik**

## Foreign Exchange Rates

STEELING			DOLLAR			D-MARK
Country	Spot	1 month 3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot
US	10890	31-11	39-95	1000		01578
Canada	22701	65-80	81-70	13369	30-29	85-64
Germany	25590	70-75	86-30	17338	36-36	76-12
France	95000	220-234	738-706	16786	18-16	360-368
Italy	27800	20-20	40-35	15515	35-25	410-410
Japan	9576	26-25	86-43	1842	38-35	87-50
Belgium	1421	26-25	86-43	1842	38-35	87-50
Denmark	58184	31-31	33-44	16545	16-45	245-215
Finland	10016	69-69	100-100	16504	42-47	990-340
Netherlands	9947	39-32	271-253	18505	4-4	10-10
Norway	10692	3-2	2-2	15580	6-4	38-25
Sweden	330-320	65-65	72-64	163-83	453-422	4-77
Ireland	11862	30-30	69-61	15656	10-40	105-47
Spain	200-178	750-640	27653	106-47	54-53	54-53
Switzerland	2710	37-50	101-97	18616	30-27	148-143
Greece	23714	84-80	281-278	14674	5-5	44-44
Australia	1555	35-35	91-91	13859	22-27	87-88
Malaysia	12570	30-39	194-37	17104	61-64	64-66
Indonesia	41327	0-0	0-0	14482	7-8	31-33
New Zealand	27373	0-0	0-0	37608	1-4	6-10
South Africa	57436	0-0	0-0	14698	25-6	60-23
South Korea	23369	0-0	0-0	14698		01226

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	12581	0.8939	Nigeria	955.83	65.2000
Brazil	93669	2.2038	Oman	0.0507	0.1580
Canada	17594	0.7078	Pakistan	63.0047	28.4000
China	13.5081	0.1093	Portugal	286.559	14.060
Colombia	5.8933	3.4009	Russia	1.8482	0.0200
Czechia	84.904	5.9891	South Africa	9.4388	5.76200
France	34.6682	0.8051	Spain	7.2820	4.950
Germany	445.884	29.0000	Switzerland	67.776	229.000
Greece	98.9303	35.7520	Taiwan	0.0175	36.790
Japan	0.0027	0.0001	UK		

Notes: Forward rates quoted in this box are at a discount (underneath spot rates). Some quoted rates for India, Pakistan and South Africa are for 90-day periods.

## Tourist Rates

Cays	Z Bays	Z Bays	Z Bays
Australia(Dollars)	2,950	France(Francs)	9,690
Austria(Schillings)	5,400	Germany(Marks)	2,750
Belgium(Francs)	589,000	Greece(Drachmas)	439,000
Canada(Dollars)	2,825	Hong Kong(Dollars)	12,500
Cyprus(Pounds)	1,046	India(Rupees)	19,450
Cyprus(Pounds)	1,046	Indonesia(Rupias)	273,000
Denmark(Danish)	6,570	Japan(Yen)	83,000
Holland(Gulden)	3,200	Mexico(Pesos)	6,690
France(Marks)	9,850	New Zealand(Dollars)	2,305
		Norway(Kr.)	16,700
		Portugal(Escudos)	278,000
		Spain(Pesetas)	58,600
		Sweden(Kronor)	5,465
		Switzerland(Francs)	2,895
		Turkey(Lira)	229,000,000
		United States(Dollars)	1,580

### Interest Rates

UK Base	850%	Germany Discount	250%	US Prime	850%	Japan Discount	050%
France		Lombard	495%	Discount	500%	Sweden	
Intervention	30%	Canada		Fed Funds	550%	Discount	250%
Discount		Prime	475%	Repo		Central	300%
Netherlands	65%	Denmark	500%	10-Day Repo	525%	Switzerland	
Advances	250%	Discount	325%	Sweden Repo (Avg)	410%	Lombard	10%

## Bond Yields

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
UK	209	683	7256	207	Netherlands	8256	451	7376	560
US	6836	631	6256	643	Spain	7976	313	7256	560
Japan	5506	172	23676	200	Italy	61576	647	6176	785
France	1026	817	6796	733	Belgium	507	476	8256	591
Germany	806	477	606	477	Sweden	1876	567	6376	683
Source	4276	482	5576	558	ECU	467	567	57676	603

Yields calculated on bond basis. \*\* Denotes over benchmark

Sourced HSBC Markets Research

	OverNight		7 Day		1 Month		3 Months		6 Months		1 Year	
Interbank	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	7 1/4
Starting CUs	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	7 1/4
Local Activity Daps	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	7 1/4
Discount Market Daps	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4	7 1/4
Treasury Bills (Day)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other CUs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ECU Interest	-	-	-	-	4	4	4 1/4	4 1/4	4 1/4	4 1/4	4 3/8	4 3/8

## Liffe Financial Futures

Contract		Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est/Cont'd	Open interest
Long Oil	(Jun '87)	114-15	114-25 114-12	483	1296
Govern Gov Bd	(Sep '87)	101.32	101.69 101.22	226572	254839
Japan Gov Bd	(Jun '87)	93.84	93.87 93.84	65799	16623
3 Mth Sterling	(Jun '87)	93.18	93-35 93-18	1972	n/a
	(Jun '87)	93.30	93-30 93-30	404	35036
	(Sep '87)	93.75	93-75 93-15	19432	42944
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Sep '87)	98.82	98-85 98-85	25552	27340
	(Dec '87)	98.11	98-14 98-71	2295-2	

3 Mth Euribor	Dec 97	93.28	93.42	93.26	7555	116177
	Jan 98	93.7	93.87	94.35	7663	69693
3 Mth Euroyen	Dec 97	99.76	99.71	99.13	505	
3 Mth Eurosterling	Dec 97	98.46	98.52	98.42	20374	68966
	Jan 98	98.36	98.36	98.36	2007	40069
3 Mth ECU	Dec 97	95.89	95.90	95.96	807	
	Jan 98	95.85	95.86	95.89	255	55542
FTSE 100	Dec 97	46818	47070	29500	490	49000
FTSE 250	Jan 97	46540	45540	45540	825	4381

Settlement price: 6679	closing offer price			Call/Put	
Series	4800	4950	4700	4750	Total/vote
Mar	68.0	481/17	20/40	6/46	--
Jul	57/55	122/71	51/52	96/120	--
Aug	180/81	150/100	183/120	95/147	--
Sep	217/97	195/117	153/138	127/155	112/161

**Commodities**

AGRICULTURAL SPECIALS - CASH

[illegible]

PRECIOUS METALS			
in lb/oz	\$	£	Coinage
gold	4760	25455	Barreils
silver	4720	26250	5 oz
new spot	4720	2679	Barreils 25 oz
new 24hr	3429	20880	Barreils 10 oz

AGRICULTURAL			
Comes	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes
FFFE	FFFE	FFFE	FFFE
Dom	Dom	Dom	Dom

1991	Jul	1990	Sep	1989	Oct	1988	Nov	1987	Dec	1986	Jan	1985	Feb	1984	Mar	1983	Apr	1982	May	1981	Jun	1980	Jul	1979	Aug	1978	Sep	1977	Oct	1976	Nov	1975	Dec	1974	Jan	1973	Feb	1972	Mar	1971	Apr	1970	May	1969	Jun	1968	Jul	1967	Aug	1966	Sep	1965	Oct	1964	Nov	1963	Dec	1962	Jan	1961	Feb	1960	Mar	1959	Apr	1958	May	1957	Jun	1956	Jul	1955	Aug	1954	Sep	1953	Oct	1952	Nov	1951	Dec	1950	Jan	1949	Feb	1948	Mar	1947	Apr	1946	May	1945	Jun	1944	Jul	1943	Aug	1942	Sep	1941	Oct	1940	Nov	1939	Dec	1938	Jan	1937	Feb	1936	Mar	1935	Apr	1934	May	1933	Jun	1932	Jul	1931	Aug	1930	Sep	1929	Oct	1928	Nov	1927	Dec	1926	Jan	1925	Feb	1924	Mar	1923	Apr	1922	May	1921	Jun	1920	Jul	1919	Aug	1918	Sep	1917	Oct	1916	Nov	1915	Dec	1914	Jan	1913	Feb	1912	Mar	1911	Apr	1910	May	1909	Jun	1908	Jul	1907	Aug	1906	Sep	1905	Oct	1904	Nov	1903	Dec	1902	Jan	1901	Feb	1900	Mar	1899	Apr	1898	May	1897	Jun	1896	Jul	1895	Aug	1894	Sep	1893	Oct	1892	Nov	1891	Dec	1890	Jan	1889	Feb	1888	Mar	1887	Apr	1886	May	1885	Jun	1884	Jul	1883	Aug	1882	Sep	1881	Oct	1880	Nov	1879	Dec	1878	Jan	1877	Feb	1876	Mar	1875	Apr	1874	May	1873	Jun	1872	Jul	1871	Aug	1870	Sep	1869	Oct	1868	Nov	1867	Dec	1866	Jan	1865	Feb	1864	Mar	1863	Apr	1862	May	1861	Jun	1860	Jul	1859	Aug	1858	Sep	1857	Oct	1856	Nov	1855	Dec	1854	Jan	1853	Feb	1852	Mar	1851	Apr	1850	May	1849	Jun	1848	Jul	1847	Aug	1846	Sep	1845	Oct	1844	Nov	1843	Dec	1842	Jan	1841	Feb	1840	Mar	1839	Apr	1838	May	1837	Jun	1836	Jul	1835	Aug	1834	Sep	1833	Oct	1832	Nov	1831	Dec	1830	Jan	1829	Feb	1828	Mar	1827	Apr	1826	May	1825	Jun	1824	Jul	1823	Aug	1822	Sep	1821	Oct	1820	Nov	1819	Dec	1818	Jan	1817	Feb	1816	Mar	1815	Apr	1814	May	1813	Jun	1812	Jul	1811	Aug	1810	Sep	1809	Oct	1808	Nov	1807	Dec	1806	Jan	1805	Feb	1804	Mar	1803	Apr	1802	May	1801	Jun	1800	Jul	1799	Aug	1798	Sep	1797	Oct	1796	Nov	1795	Dec	1794	Jan	1793	Feb	1792	Mar	1791	Apr	1790	May	1789	Jun	1788	Jul	1787	Aug	1786	Sep	1785	Oct	1784	Nov	1783	Dec	1782	Jan	1781	Feb	1780	Mar	1779	Apr	1778	May	1777	Jun	1776	Jul	1775	Aug	1774	Sep	1773	Oct	1772	Nov	1771	Dec	1770	Jan	1769	Feb	1768	Mar	1767	Apr	1766	May	1765	Jun	1764	Jul	1763	Aug	1762	Sep	1761	Oct	1760	Nov	1759	Dec	1758	Jan	1757	Feb	1756	Mar	1755	Apr	1754	May	1753	Jun	1752	Jul	1751	Aug	1750	Sep	1749	Oct	1748	Nov	1747	Dec	1746	Jan	1745	Feb	1744	Mar	1743	Apr	1742	May	1741	Jun	1740	Jul	1739	Aug	1738	Sep	1737	Oct	1736	Nov	1735	Dec	1734	Jan	1733	Feb	1732	Mar	1731	Apr	1730	May	1729	Jun	1728	Jul	1727	Aug	1726	Sep	1725	Oct	1724	Nov	1723	Dec	1722	Jan	1721	Feb	1720	Mar	1719	Apr	1718	May	1717	Jun	1716	Jul	1715	Aug	1714	Sep	1713	Oct	1712	Nov	1711	Dec	1710	Jan	1709	Feb	1708	Mar	1707	Apr	1706	May	1705	Jun	1704	Jul	1703	Aug	1702	Sep	1701	Oct	1700	Nov	1699	Dec	1698	Jan	1697	Feb	1696	Mar	1695	Apr	1694	May	1693	Jun	1692	Jul	1691	Aug	1690	Sep	1689	Oct	1688	Nov	1687	Dec	1686	Jan	1685	Feb	1684	Mar	1683	Apr	1682	May	1681	Jun	1680	Jul	1679	Aug	1678	Sep	1677	Oct	1676	Nov	1675	Dec	1674	Jan	1673	Feb	1672	Mar	1671	Apr	1670	May	1669	Jun	1668	Jul	1667	Aug	1666	Sep	1665	Oct	1664	Nov	1663	Dec	1662	Jan	1661	Feb	1660	Mar	1659	Apr	1658	May	1657	Jun	1656	Jul	1655	Aug	1654	Sep	1653	Oct	1652	Nov	1651	Dec	1650	Jan	1649	Feb	1648	Mar	1647	Apr	1646	May	1645	Jun	1644	Jul	1643	Aug	1642	Sep	1641	Oct	1640	Nov	1639	Dec	1638	Jan	1637	Feb	1636	Mar	1635	Apr	1634	May	1633	Jun	1632	Jul	1631	Aug	1630	Sep	1629	Oct	1628	Nov	1627	Dec	1626	Jan	1625	Feb	1624	Mar	1623	Apr	1622	May	1621	Jun	1620	Jul	1619	Aug	1618	Sep	1617	Oct	1616	Nov	1615	Dec	1614	Jan	1613	Feb	1612	Mar	1611	Apr	1610	May	1609	Jun	1608	Jul	1607	Aug	1606	Sep	1605	Oct	1604	Nov	1603	Dec	1602	Jan	1601	Feb	1600	Mar	1599	Apr	1598	May	1597	Jun	1596	Jul	1595	Aug	1594	Sep	1593	Oct	1592	Nov	1591	Dec	1590	Jan	1589	Feb	1588	Mar	1587	Apr	1586	May	1585	Jun	1584	Jul	1583	Aug	1582	Sep	1581	Oct	1580	Nov	1579	Dec	1578	Jan	1577	Feb	1576	Mar	1575	Apr	1574	May	1573	Jun	1572	Jul	1571	Aug	1570	Sep	1569	Oct	1568	Nov	1567	Dec	1566	Jan	1565	Feb	1564	Mar	1563	Apr	1562	May	1561	Jun	1560	Jul	1559	Aug	1558	Sep	1557	Oct	1556	Nov	1555	Dec	1554	Jan	1553	Feb	1552	Mar	1551	Apr	1550	May	1549	Jun	1548	Jul	1547	Aug	1546	Sep	1545	Oct	1544	Nov	1543	Dec	1542	Jan	1541	Feb	1540	Mar	1539	Apr	1538	May	1537	Jun	1536	Jul	1535	Aug	1534	Sep	1533	Oct	1532	Nov	1531	Dec	1530	Jan	1529	Feb	1528	Mar	1527	Apr	1526	May	1525	Jun	1524	Jul	1523	Aug	1522	Sep	1521	Oct	1520	Nov	1519	Dec	1518	Jan	1517	Feb	1516	Mar	1515	Apr	1514	May	1513	Jun	1512	Jul	1511	Aug	1510	Sep	1509	Oct	1508	Nov	1507	Dec	1506	Jan	1505	Feb	1504	Mar	1503	Apr	1502	May	1501	Jun	1500	Jul	1499	Aug	1498	Sep	1497	Oct	1496	Nov	1495	Dec	1494	Jan	1493	Feb	1492	Mar	1491	Apr	1490	May	1489	Jun	1488	Jul	1487	Aug	1486	Sep	1485	Oct	1484	Nov	1483	Dec	1482	Jan	1481	Feb	1480	Mar	1479	Apr	1478	May	1477	Jun	1476	Jul	1475	Aug	1474	Sep	1473	Oct	1472	Nov	1471	Dec	1470	Jan	1469	Feb	1468	Mar	1467	Apr	1466	May	1465	Jun	1464	Jul	1463	Aug	1462	Sep	1461	Oct	1460	Nov	1459	Dec	1458	Jan	1457	Feb	1456	Mar	1455	Apr	1454	May	1453	Jun	1452	Jul	1451	Aug	1450	Sep	1449	Oct	1448	Nov	1447	Dec	1446	Jan	1445	Feb	1444	Mar	1443	Apr	1442	May	1441	Jun	1440	Jul	1439	Aug	1438	Sep	1437	Oct	1436	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Commodities							Products 1		(\$/tonnes)
5.30pm	*chg	Yr ago	%E	close	*chg		Spm	SPC Off North West	
1817		Jul	63.25	+200	Avg	9340		Pump/Linedred	193/195
1830	+015	Aug	63.50	+175	Spd			Naphtha	193/195
1840	+017	Sep	63.75	+150	Oct			EC Gasoil	193/197
2014		Index:	1785	Vat	12834	Nov		Fuel Oil	193/197
© 1995-1996 Phillips Data Yr ago prices show average for Nov.							Source	KBS-London OI Reports from prices	81/83
<b>COMMODITY INDICES</b>									
Oil Indices	Basis date	+Spot	%Day	Chg	Dur	31st	%Yr-chng		

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d	ex dividend
e	exit charge applies
	when units are sold
buy	formerly 'offer'
sell	formerly 'bid'
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هكذا من الأصل

ROYAL ASCOT: An owner receives the opening day credits while on the track a top filly produces an outstanding performance

# Sheikh has the Palace credit

RICHARD EDMONDSON

When Sheikh Mohammed speaks so many people jump that the earth probably jumps considerably less for a moment. One of his trainers, David Loder, went so far that he was over the moon yesterday after complying with the owner's instruction to run the victorious Starborough in the St James's Palace Stakes. "I have to say that all the credit for this win is due to Sheikh Mohammed because I was very keen to run in France on Sunday over 10 furlongs but he insisted we come here," Loder said. "He was quite right. This is the meeting."

Starborough looked the business both before and during racing yesterday. The colt made himself notable in the preliminaries by buying wildly, appar-

ently in conversation with the outsider, Running Stag. Equally outstanding was his burrished chestnut hide, which appeared to have been the work of a French polisher. Royal Ascot falls at a point of the season for thoroughbreds that ensures that the buttonholes are not alone in blooming for the occasion. The eight runners for yesterday's feature race were mobile artwork as well as athletes, the big-bottomed Desert King and Daylami especially kind on the eye. The latter, a milky grey, wore a white noseband, which was lost on him like plimsolls on a snowman.

It was heat, however, that characterised this year's St James's Palace Stakes from the outset. There were the winners of four of this year's European 2,000 Guineas on display but any notion that they would be

allowed to prance around permitted the moment Frankie Dettori shoved Starborough to the vanguard early on. "He has got a very high cruising speed and there were some horses out there with a greater turn of foot so I wanted to take the sting out of them," the Italian reported.

RICHARD EDMONDSON  
NAP: Cadeaux Triest  
(Royal Ascot 4.20)  
NB: Humourless  
(Royal Ascot 5.30)

By the time the contestants returned towards the tumult of the stands, it became clear that only Air Express retained enough energy in his legs to give Starborough a race. Daylami and Desert King, the French and Irish Guineas winners respectively, were the most dis-

appointing. Their eclipses continued the freak statistic that the trainers Alain de Royer-Dupré and Aidan O'Brien, leading figures in their domestic fields, had yet to saddle a Flat winner in Britain. (The Irishman did, however, clean up his discrepancy 35 minutes later).

It was left to Air Express, who had won the London prices of the Italian and German Guineas, to mount a chase. Clive Brittain, his trainer, whose hopefulness is such that he would go hunting 'gator with rod and line, was once again rewarded for his audacity with £40,000-plus in place money. He was not surprised. "If a horse has won two Classics, I don't care if they're in Timbuktu, it means he's a good horse," the Newmarket man said.

Starborough, though, reveling in the new tactics that have been employed with him this sea-

son, was even better. "Last year he was a little bit keen at home so we dropped him in for his races to give him a chance," Loder said. "This year we decided to just let him roll and, as you can see, when he gets going he's got a pretty ferocious roll."

The result resuscitated the value of the English Guineas, in which Starborough was fourth to Entrepreneur. (Michael Tabor, the latter's owner, reported yesterday that nothing had been found amiss medically with his Derby flop and the Irish equivalent could be the next stippling point).

"He's improved between seven and 10 pounds since he ran in the Guineas," Loder said. "We felt that over this stiff mile we could turn the gas on with him and it would take a good one to go past."

"And a bend helps him. If



Dettori: Stole rivals' sting

you're in front it's like when you're running a race yourself and you're at the front of the convoy. You steal a length at every turn and that's what counted in the end today."

All options are now open for Starborough, who even holds an engagement in the Irish Derby, though he is far more likely to run in the Eclipse. But then again Sheikh Mohammed may have in mind a claimer at Nad Al Sheba.

Results, page 31

## Homage from Cecil after Sham's show

GREG WOOD

When certain jockeys return to the winners' enclosure and insist that their mount is "the best I've ridden", they are met by a chorus of knowing sniggers from an audience which has heard it all a hundred times before. When Henry Cecil offers a similar judgement, however, everyone listens, and the tight huddle around the most successful trainer of the last two decades was an oasis of silence here yesterday as Cecil declared Bosra Sham to be the finest horse ever to carry one of his saddledcloths.

This, remember, is a man who has prepared 19 English Classic winners, horses like Reference Point and Oh So Sharp, Old Vic, Diminution and Wootton, but after Bosra Sham's eight-length stroll in the Prince of Wales's Stakes, no one was in a mood to argue. "I've never said it before and I almost hate to do it now because so many of them have been good to me," Cecil said, "but I think she deserves it now."

Bosra Sham has now won seven of her eight starts, with a second place to Mark Of Esteem in last year's Queen Elizabeth II Stakes the only blemish on an

otherwise perfect record. The field for yesterday's race was one of the poorest she has faced, but the burst of speed which carried her clear in the straight was breathtaking none the less, and Cecil is now planning a campaign which could mark her down as one of the finest competitors that any of us have seen.

"As we are going to see her for the rest of the year, let's try and appreciate her because we might not get another one like this for some time," Cecil said. "She will run next in the Eclipse [at Sandown on 5 July], and then it's whether we go for the Sussex Stakes, or the King George or the International at York. I'm not sure whether to run her over 12 furlongs [in the King George], I'd hate to ruin her, she doesn't deserve it."

To add the King George to her Group One wins at eight and 10 furlongs would secure Bosra Sham's place in turf history, and Kieren Fallon, her jockey, is confident that she has what it takes. "I think she'll stay a mile and a half," Fallon said. "I would prefer to step her up rather than go back to a mile, but she's got so much speed I think she can do either."

For the second year running, a former Cecil resident who now races in the royal blue of Godolphin took the first race of the meeting, the Queen Anne Stakes, but while Charnwood Forest's win 12 months ago was just one more stepping-off point on the road to the trainers' title, it was a much-needed moment of relief for the men from Dubai when Allied Forces held off Centre Stakes yesterday.

"We've been in the wilderness for a long time so it's nice to be back in the winner's enclosure," Simon Crisford, Godolphin's racing manager, said. "I don't believe there has been a problem, 90 per cent of it has been that the horses haven't been good enough and we've been asking them to compete at a level that's a little too tough for them. We've decided to move out a lot of older horses, bring in the young players and bring them along for next year."

Another hint for 1998 was Harbour King's success in the Coventry Stakes, a first win on the Flat in Britain for Aidan O'Brien. The nudge, however, may be towards King Of Years, another of O'Brien's two-year-olds, whom the trainer conceded "might have a length or two" on Harbour King. A more immediately relevant snippet is that Harbour King is said to be the worst of O'Brien's four juveniles at Ascot this week.

### ROYAL ASCOT

2.30: The unbeaten Among Men has a good chance of emulating his stablemate, while Taysier is reported to be the best horse in Ed Dunlop's stable. They are both drawn high, however, and Kabal and SHAHEEN have greater appeal among those berthed on the stands side. The former was a top-class juvenile (for Dunlop) and now that the Godolphin team have him some form may be able to win on his seasonal return from wintering in Dubai. The selection broke the track record at Kempton last time and is progressing rapidly.



HYPERION'S STYLISH

3.05: DAUNTING LADY made a huge impression with a runaway win at Chester in a fast time from Heavenly Abstone, who has since validated the form. Ascot Cyclone carried a big reputation into her Bath debut, which was lost on her as she pleased. She is the danger.

3.45: Four of the fillies so comprehensively beaten by Sleepytime in the 1,000 Guineas reappear here and they may not be the same. The cause as the favorite is unlikely to get the testing pace that enables her to produce her best. MOONLIGHT PARADISE, who was probably carrying an injury when disappointing in the Guineas, may be the one to take advantage, but it is worth remembering that Kasey's debut was a poor record by three-year-olds in this event but should be running on well in the closing stages. Kalm Sunrise, on offer at 50-1 this morning, has prospects of reaching the frame.

4.20: Yesterday's 28-runner Britannia Stakes over this straight mile failed to confirm any draw advantage, but it may be worth sticking with low numbers, who dominated the finish of last year's Hunt Cup. John Dunlop saddled the first and second in this race in 1986 and his son Ed could well get near to repeating that feat with BOLD WORDS and Cadeaux Triest. The former has a decent power record by three-year-olds in this event but should be running on well in the closing stages. Kalm Sunrise, on offer at 50-1 this morning, has prospects of reaching the frame.

ROYAL HUNT CUP - 10-YEAR-OLD	
1. 2.30: Among Men (5) 11.00, 11.10, 11.20, 11.30, 11.40, 11.50, 12.00, 12.10, 12.20, 12.30, 12.40, 12.50, 13.00, 13.10, 13.20, 13.30, 13.40, 13.50, 14.00, 14.10, 14.20, 14.30, 14.40, 14.50, 15.00, 15.10, 15.20, 15.30, 15.40, 15.50, 16.00, 16.10, 16.20, 16.30, 16.40, 16.50, 17.00, 17.10, 17.20, 17.30, 17.40, 17.50, 18.00, 18.10, 18.20, 18.30, 18.40, 18.50, 19.00, 19.10, 19.20, 19.30, 19.40, 19.50, 20.00, 20.10, 20.20, 20.30, 20.40, 20.50, 21.00, 21.10, 21.20, 21.30, 21.40, 21.50, 22.00, 22.10, 22.20, 22.30, 22.40, 22.50, 23.00, 23.10, 23.20, 23.30, 23.40, 23.50, 24.00, 24.10, 24.20, 24.30, 24.40, 24.50, 25.00, 25.10, 25.20, 25.30, 25.40, 25.50, 26.00, 26.10, 26.20, 26.30, 26.40, 26.50, 27.00, 27.10, 27.20, 27.30, 27.40, 27.50, 28.00, 28.10, 28.20, 28.30, 28.40, 28.50, 29.00, 29.10, 29.20, 29.30, 29.40, 29.50, 30.00, 30.10, 30.20, 30.30, 30.40, 30.50, 31.00, 31.10, 31.20, 31.30, 31.40, 31.50, 32.00, 32.10, 32.20, 32.30, 32.40, 32.50, 33.00, 33.10, 33.20, 33.30, 33.40, 33.50, 34.00, 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# Malcolm's phoenix rises for the Ashes



recovery, this season is all about reveling in a new attitude to his cricket. "I've reached the stage now when I'm not really listening to anyone any more, but just backing myself. I've been trying to please everyone, but I've listened to all the advice, but the problem was that the advice from everyone was different. I was confused and thinking to myself: 'Who the bloody hell can I please here?'"

A benefit this year has also helped his cause, not least because one of his patrons just happens to be Nelson Mandela, a man he first met during the ill-fated 1986 Ashes tour. "After the first test they went to lunch together with John Major, who has since been dropped himself.

"It's great to be in the same team as people like Linford Christie, Sally Gunnell and Roger Black," he said. "I'm still a bit of a nobody, but I've been given the chance to prove myself. And I'm up for it."

Lee fe

## RACING RESULTS

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1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

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# Williams grows on grass but skips green party

## Tennis

DERRICK WHYTE  
reports from Eastbourne

Four days into her new career as a grass-court exponent, Venus Williams is busy accumulating a series of firsts. At the Direct Line Championships here yesterday, she accounted for Chanda Rubin to claim her inaugural victory in a main draw on the alien green surface.

Ordinarily, it would have been just cause for a healthy teenager to let down her hair and paint the town red by way of celebrating her 17th birthday. Unlike other prodigies who have attempted to make their spectacular way in the game with scarcely an acknowledgement of the world outside the courts, Williams, thankfully, is

a healthy teenager with other interests and alternative pursuits. But parties are out. She revealed herself yesterday to be a Jehovah's Witness, for whom there is no such occasion as a birthday party.

"It's my religion and that's all I know," said the youngster who offered the Centre Court gathering evidence of the power and athleticism that are a major starting point in her attempt to rival Martina Hingis as the next superior being in the women's game.

Williams won 6-4, 6-4 against a fellow American ranked 53 places above her at No 26. "Surely you celebrate your victories," someone pressed.

"Not really, I've got to play again tomorrow," was the reply from the youngster who is making her first visit to England.

At 6ft 2in and dressed in silver-grey with beaded dreadlocks, Miss Williams certainly cuts a striking figure. She grunts rather loudly - too loudly for Disgrace of Eastbourne who remarked that she was worse than that other noise-bag, Monica Seles - and her every thumping shot provokes a rustling of the heads akin to a man fingering the loose change in his pocket.

Rubin threatened first, but Williams, who played her last match on grass as far back as last weekend, quickly asserted her authority, absorbing a second break of her service before reeling off three successive games to take the first set.

Two service breaks were enough in the second as Rubin's game fell away badly. Next up for the birthday girl from Los Angeles is a second-round

meeting with Nathalie Tauziat, who put out the fifth seeded Mary Joe Fernandez.

"I am learning to come to the net more," Williams added. "I never serve and volley as much as I do on grass so this is really going to help my game a lot."

Seles, the No 1 seed, plays her first match today, but there are no second-round exertions for the trio of British entrants who all departed from the tournament yesterday.

Lucie Ahl and Jo Ward respectively lost in straight sets to the highly ranked French girl, Anne-Gaëlle Sidot, and Japan's Naoko Sawamatsu, who now has to face Seles.

But Shirr-Ann Siddall staged a fighting recovery to peg back another Japanese opponent, Ai Sugiyama, before going down 6-5 in the final set.

## Lee feels strain of success

GUY HODGSON  
reports from Nottingham

The great British sporting revival has its limits and some were discovered at the Nottingham Open yesterday. The national cricket and football teams might be basking in an afterglow of achievement but to expect our tennis players below Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski to also rise above themselves was asking too much.

Chris Wilkinson and Martin Lee tried but failed, going down in straight sets in the first round, but at least they were overcome by players who are ranked leagues ahead of them. Not so long ago you feared for any British player whenever they went on court.

Lee, 19, could even draw en-

couragement from a 38-minute 6-1, 6-1 rout by Slovakia's Karol Kucera. "Disappointed? Not at all," he said. "I had to beat Jerome Golmard, who is 98 in the world at the moment, to qualify to play here so I'm feeling pretty content."

Lee admitted to feeling tired from his exploits last week at Queen's, where he reached the third round before being swatted by Goran Ivanisevic. He won only 22 points in total and his serve came in for particularly rough treatment from Kucera, who is ranked 64th in the world.

Lee took his first service game to 30 but had to wait for another 10 games for another success, by which time the match was all but over. The end came quickly, Kucera breaking him for a fifth time to 15.

The remedy, according to

Lee, was more effort to build his body strength. "I took two weeks in the gym before Queen's," he said, "and I really felt the benefit. I need to work on my strength. Sometimes it's hard for me to stay with the power on court. The flashy shots can come when I need them."

"I don't set myself goals because I could end up disappointed if I don't achieve them. I'm just looking to improve week by week." Having gone up 118 places in seven days to 382 in the world, he was justifiably satisfied.

Which is not how you would describe Wilkinson, who surrendered 7-6, 6-4, to Germany's Marc-Kevin Goellner. "His service game seemed to last 10 seconds," the British No 3 said, "while mine seemed to last 10 minutes." A reason for that was Goellner's accuracy, which

brought three aces in the opening game and 20 in total.

Daniel Nestor also had reason to feel like the coconut in the shy as South Africa's Grant Stafford whistled nine first serves past his racket although his 6-1, 7-6 defeat might seem peaceful compared with what he will face next week.

Nestor found he had been drawn against the British No 1, Henman, in Wimbledon's first round and, having had to face Greg Rusedski on Court One last year, has every reason to feel aggrieved with his lot. "It's tough because he's going to have a lot of support," he said.

"The Wimbledon crowd are fair. At least they won't be heckling me or screaming between first and second serves like they do in Davis Cup matches in South America." Oh no?



Hair-raising: Williams makes an impact at Eastbourne yesterday Photograph: Allsport

## Davidson stung by long ban

### Rugby League

The Oldham second row Paul Davidson has appealed against a three-match ban for biting an opponent in last Saturday's Vixen World Cup Championship match in Townsville.

The Australasian Super League judiciary, handed out the suspension after finding him guilty of the charge. But Davidson immediately appealed, as the suspension rules him out of Oldham's final match in Australia, against the Adelaide Rams, and the next two Super League matches.

Davidson was charged with "on-field conduct" following an on-field skirmish with the Cowboys' stand-off, Ian Dunemann, midway through the first half at Stockland Stadium. Dunemann complained to the referee, showing alleged bite marks on his upper left arm, and Davidson was placed on report.

The Leeds loose-forward Terry Newson was also suspended yesterday - for one match - after pleading guilty to a "dangerous throw" in Adelaide Rams' David Boughton in Friday night's match, for which he was sent off.

The Auckland Warriors, meanwhile, are considering launching an appeal after the hooker Syd Eru was banned for his dismissal in the match at Bradford on Saturday. The New Zealand Test No 9 was sent off for a high tackle on Bradford's Andy Hodgson just before half-time in the Warriors' 20-16 victory.

The League disciplinary committee handed out a one-match suspension, which will rule him out of the club's final match of the first round - next Monday's fixture at Warrington.

### RACING RESULTS

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### TODAY'S NUMBER

#### 188

The number of teams - who will contest the three European football trophies in 1997-98. There will be 24 teams in the Champions League and 102 in the UEFA Cup. The draw for the qualifying rounds is on 9 July.

### Baseball

#### INTER-LEAGUE GAMES: Chicago Cubs (NL) 6 Chicago White Sox (AL) 3; New York Mets (NL) 6 New York Yankees (AL) 0; Boston (AL) 1 Philadelphia (NL) 4 (10 innings); Detroit (NL) 2 Toronto (AL) 3; Atlanta (NL) 5 Toronto (AL) 0; Kansas City (AL) 5 Houston (NL) 2; Cincinnati (NL) 3 St Louis (NL) 0; Pittsburgh (NL) 6 Minnesota (NL) 0; Montreal (NL) 6 Baltimore (AL) 4; Cleveland (AL) 1 Cleveland (AL) 2.

### Cricket

#### First day of three

##### Nottinghamshire v Northants

Nottinghamshire won by 111 runs. Nottinghamshire 234 (100 overs), Northants 123 (48 overs). Nottinghamshire: 1. Paul 50, 2. Paul 50, 3. Paul 50, 4. Paul 50, 5. Paul 50, 6. Paul 50, 7. Paul 50, 8. Paul 50, 9. Paul 50, 10. Paul 50, 11. Paul 50, 12. Paul 50, 13. Paul 50, 14. Paul 50, 15. Paul 50, 16. Paul 50, 17. Paul 50, 18. Paul 50, 19. Paul 50, 20. Paul 50, 21. Paul 50, 22. Paul 50, 23. Paul 50, 24. Paul 50, 25. Paul 50, 26. Paul 50, 27. Paul 50, 28. Paul 50, 29. Paul 50, 30. Paul 50, 31. Paul 50, 32. Paul 50, 33. Paul 50, 34. Paul 50, 35. Paul 50, 36. Paul 50, 37. Paul 50, 38. Paul 50, 39. Paul 50, 40. Paul 50, 41. Paul 50, 42. Paul 50, 43. Paul 50, 44. Paul 50, 45. Paul 50, 46. Paul 50, 47. Paul 50, 48. Paul 50, 49. Paul 50, 50. Paul 50, 51. Paul 50, 52. Paul 50, 53. Paul 50, 54. Paul 50, 55. Paul 50, 56. Paul 50, 57. Paul 50, 58. Paul 50, 59. Paul 50, 60. Paul 50, 61. Paul 50, 62. Paul 50, 63. Paul 50, 64. Paul 50, 65. Paul 50, 66. Paul 50, 67. Paul 50, 68. Paul 50, 69. 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